EIPHNOMAXIA.

THE AGREEMENT and DISTANCE OF BRETHREN:

Or, a brief Survey of

The Judgement of Mr. *F. G.* and the Church of God walking with him, touching these important Heads of Doctrine.

1. *Election and Reprobation.*
2. *The Death of Christ.*
3. *The Grace of God, in and about Conversion.*
4. *The liberty or power of the will, or of the Creature Man.*
5. *The Perseverance of the Saints.*

Truly and plainly declaring the particulars, as well agreed upon, as dissented in, between them, and their Christian Brethren of opposite judgement to them in some things about the said Doctrines.

Together, with a short touch of some of the principal Grounds and Reasons upon which the said Pastor and Church cannot consent in judgement with their Brethren about those particulars (relating to the said Heads of Doctrine) wherein the disagreement standeth.

If in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing, Phil. 3. 15, 16.

And not as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, &c. Rom. 3. 8.

London, Printed for *Peter Parker*, at the right-hand Shop in *Popes-head-Ally*, next *Cornhill*, 1671.

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AN ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER,

Concerning the enſuing Diſcourſe.

Good Reader,

THE *ſmall piece now in thy hand is (in true conſtruction) only apologetical and* defenſive, *and therefore we hope will not be* offenſive *unto thee, or any other. It is lawful, yea, and matter of duty, even for an offender, and this unto merit of death it ſelf, in caſe he be unduly, and contrary to courſe of Law, aſſaulted, to riſe up in his might for his own defence; how much more for him, that is conſcious to himſelf of no miſcarriage, but knoweth certainly that ſuch things are laid to his charge, which he knoweth not? Though the greater part of the Bulk of theſe papers be beſtowed upon the juſtification of*

our selves in some Doctrines, and Tenents, which we own, and for the owning of which (together with a supposed owning of many others) we suffer in many mens thoughts, words, and deportments, relating to us, the penalty of persons deeply and dangerously erroneous, (if not heretical) yet this is not the right eye of our design in drawing up the account here presented unto thee; but rather the washing of our hearts and hands in innocency before all the World, from the guilt of many enormous, and some ridiculous, opinions, which some would fain thrust into the Company and Retinue of those Tenents, which we hold in opposition unto them, hoping by this means to disparage, and render these the more obnoxious unto jealousies and prejudice in the minds of men. For are there not some Ministers, in, and about the City, so far from all Christian *ingenuity, as (in a language sufficiently understood by their hearers) openly, and from their Pulpits, to declaim against us, as in our Doctrine of Election, denying the God-head of the Father as* Arrius *denying the God-head of the Son, as holding an election of qualities, not*

of

of perſons, unto Salvation, as exalting nature above or againſt free Grace, as affirming that men by their own ſtrength, and without the ſpecial Grace of God, may repent, believe, and be ſaved, as denying a power in God to bring to paſs his intentions, (to omit many other particulars, of like wicked and abſurd import) which not only we from our ſoul, but our Doctrines alſo, do as much abhor, as themſelves, and much more than ſome of their Doctrines.

To prevent (for the future) the ſin of ſlander (or at leaſt of unadviſed ſpeaking) in others, who, through the undue ſuggeſtions of their Teachers, may ſpeak much evil of us, and our Doctrines, falſly; and in our ſelves, the ſin of leaving a pit uncovered, into which men may very poſſibly fall, yea, and by falling receive much prejudice and harm, we have drawn up and publiſhed this brief model of our ſenſe, as well in the negative, as affirmative, about the five heads of Doctrine, which, in ſome particulars relating to them, are at this day ſolemnly controverted between us, and many of our Brethren, partakers many of them (we queſtion

not) of like precious Faith with us. Herein we have plainly and faithfully (as far as God was pleaſed to aſſiſt our underſtandings, and memories, in the work) expreſſed under every of the ſaid Heads (reſpectively) all the particulars of moment, wherein we conſent in judgement with them, as alſo wherein we diſſent from them. It is very like there are ſundry other particulars in either kind, which are not here mentioned; but we ſuppoſe they are all dependent upon, and reducible unto, theſe, as conſequences or concluſions are to their principles, or premiſes. Henceforth (we truſt) that mouth of ungodlineſs will be ſtopped, which hath opened it ſelf wide againſt us, to charge us at peradventure, if not with the regret and gainſaying of the Conſcience belonging to it.

Amongſt the particulars of Agreement, when any thing is mentioned, which may poſſibly (to ſome) ſeem doubtful on our Brethrens ſide, as, viz. whether they concur with us in ſuch a thing, or no, we ſpecifie (in the Margent) ſome Authentick Author, or other, one, or more, known to be of their judgement

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in theſe controverſies, who aſſerteth it, together with direction where the ſaid aſſertion is to be found in his writings. Concerning ſuch particulars of this import, which are generally known to be as well the ſenſe of our Brethren, as ours, we content our ſelves with the naked mention, or naming of them.

Concerning the account we render of our Judgement, in thoſe particulars, wherein we diſſent, (as we conceive) from our Brethren, we do it, partly by Scripture, partly by ground & argument otherwiſe; & in both, we (according to the exigency of our purpoſe in theſe papers) are very brief, ſometimes only pointing at the Scriptures, which we build upon, and no where inſiſting long upon any: and for our arguments otherwiſe, we rather ſhew their heads only, than the juſt proportions of their bodies. Only for ſuch, both Scriptures, and Arguments, which have been more throughly diſcuſſed in a Treatiſe not long ſince publiſhed by one of us, entituled, Redemption Redeemed, *we in our Margent, and ſometimes in the page it ſelf, refer thee to the particular places of their reſpective diſcuſſions. We do not here inter-*

meddle, little, or much, with any Objection made by our Adversaries, either against our pleadings from Scripture, or other Arguments; nor with any Argument levied by them in defence of their Opinions, both these being eccentrical to our present design, and (indeed) inconsistent with the brevity resolved upon by us. Only we conceive that it may (probably) hereafter, fall in the way of some of us to discourse our sense concerning them, and to vindicate both our Scripture-pleas, and others, from all prejudice or annoyance by them.

If any mans heart shall stir him up to make answer to what is here argued and pleaded by us, either from the Scriptures, or otherwise, in justification of our dissentings from our Brethren, in the Heads of Doctrine specified (in the title of these papers) our desire to him, is, 1. That if he desires either our satisfaction, or reply, he will please to give us fair and Christian Language, as here he receives. For it is not lightly possible that any Rabshecah should satisfie us; nor probable that we shall so much as attempt to satisfie him, by any reply. 2. When he shall, in the course of his answer, come

to

to undertake such, either proofs from Scripture, or other Arguments, to the fuller and larger debate whereof elsewhere we refer, that he will not oppose, or insist upon, any thing which is there already answered, unless withal he be able substantially to refute those answers. 3. (And lastly,) That he will not deal so dis-ingenuously, as to trouble, either us or others, with impertinencies under the name of answers; or with such notions instead of replies, which his own Conscience shall tell him are but evasions, and shifts, and which he knoweth himself how to answer and satisfie.

The chief Oracles which we have consulted about this great soul-concernment, our forsaking our Brethrens Doctrine, which we sometimes embraced with them, in the particulars specified in these papers, were these two: 1. The nature and attributes of God, as they are plainly written and asserted, as well in the Book of Nature, as of Grace. 2. The interest of true Godliness, sufficiently stated and declared in both Books likewise, though with more lightsomness and Authority, in the latter. And we verily

believe,

believe, that if thou wilt lay the same ear of a conscientious unprejudicatenesse as close to them, as we have done, thou wilt hear them distinctly admonishing and advising thee also, to steer the same course with us. Far be it from us to obtrude any of our notions upon thee, or any other man: we desire a liberty of judging for our selves: and therefore cannot reasonably prescribe unto others. Nor dare we so much as advise thee to drink of our waters, unless thou drawest them from the same fountain with us. The Lord Christ rather reproved him who saluted him by that honourable Title of, Good, *as not knowing (it seems) a sufficient ground for such a salutation, nor believing him to be God.* Mat. 19. 17. *Nor do we desire thine, or any mans flattering or complemental owning of our notions for Truth. If thou seest them not upon their foundations, thou seest them not in their glory: neither canst thou with ingenuity of Conscience, either think, or speak, worthily of them. Truth delighteth little in the tongues or countenances of men, until she hath secured their judgements, and set up her Throne in their understand-*

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ings. But this we can with all good aſſurance, inform thee, concerning her; that well underſtood, ſhe will bear any mans charges that ſhall travel with her through the World; though we muſt confeſs withal, that many times her company is very coſtly. But what ſhe ſpends in ſilver, ſhe repays in gold; and with the rubbidge and ruines of mens names, friends, and fortunes, in the World, builds up their Conſciences with that peace, which paſſeth all underſtanding, and with that joy which is unſpeakable, and full of glory.

Neither ſhall it be any matter of diſcouragement or diſcontent unto us in the leaſt, that the generality of men, whether learned, or others, cannot preſently comport in judgement with us about the Doctrines held forth and avouched in theſe papers. Nor is that weakneſs in men which our ſaviour taketh knowledge of (Luke 5. 39.) *any offence at all unto us in our caſe.* No man having drunken old wine, ſtraight-way deſireth new: for, he ſaith, The old is better: *We conſider, that as mens bodies muſt have a competent time allowed them for a removal of themſelves from one place to*

another,

another, diſtant from it, ſo muſt their minds and underſtandings alſo, for a regular and man-like quitting of a former opinion, held with any tolerable degree of probability, to take up another oppoſite to it in its ſtead. We our ſelves were not ſuddenly, nor without many a looking back towards our former opinions, nor yet without many a going round about them before we left them, built up in that Faith, wherein we now ſtand, and for the entertainment whereof, we have not only forſaken many of our Brethren in the way of their Judgements, but perſons neerer unto us than they, we mean, our ſelves. Notwithſtanding we are full of this belief and expectation, that within the compaſs of a few years, if not ſooner, there will be as great a change in the greateſt part of the preſent Oppoſers of theſe our Doctrines, as there was in Paul, *when the Churches of* Judea *heard this of him,* That he which perſecuted us in times paſt, now preacheth the Faith which once he deſtroyed, (*Gal.* 1. 23.) *well knowing, that it is the nature and property of Truth, having a convenient time allowed her for the exploit, to deal with errors, as* Moſes *rod*

turn'd

turn'd into a Serpent, did by the rods of the Egyptian *Inchanters, when it devoured them.*

We are unwilling (good Reader) to ſurcharge thy patience; otherwiſe we had ſeveral other things relating to the buſineſs before thee, and very worthy thy cognizance, to have imparted unto thee; eſpecially concerning that dangerous generation of men amongſt us, who ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt men, *whilſt they pretend to open it unto them:* for they neither enter themſelves, neither ſuffer they them that are entring to go in. *But we ſhall diſmiſs thee (at preſent) with theſe few advertiſements already given, only following thee with our fervent and unfeigned prayer unto God, that he will keep thee from our errors, and not ſuffer men to keep thee from any his precious Truths with us.*

Thy Cordial Friends and well-willers in Chriſt,

John Goodwin. John Price.
Thomas Lamb. Daniel Taylor.

George

George Foxcroft. John Dye.
William Allen. Joſ. Hutchinſon.
Richard Arnald. Thomas Taſſel.
William Godfrey. George Cook.
Hemond Brend. Samuel Sowthen.

In the name, and by the conſent, of the Church.

ERRATA.

In the Agreement & Diſtance of Brethren,

PAge 7. line 4. for diſſervent, read diſſervient. p. 14. l. 33. for Pſal. 8. 15. r. Pſal. 86. 15. p. 34. l. 31. for diſpondency, r. deſpondency. p. 82. in the marg. for *Joh.* 5. 3, 4. r. *Joh.* 5. 34. p. 101. l. 10. for *Rom.* 6. 21. r. *Rom.* 5. 21. p. 114. l. 20. for mean, r. meant. p. 133. l. 2. for tha, r. that.

ERRATA. ×

In the Pagans Debt and Dowry.

PAge 1. line *ult.* after of, r. a. p. 2. l. 1. after with, r. in. p. 9. l. 28. for false, r. false. p. 25. in the marg. last l. but two, for *temporalis*, r. *temporales*, p. 35. in the marg. l. 1. for *promitit*, r. *promittit*. p. 44. l. 23. for μιρυχθὲν, r. μηρυχὲντος. p. 48. l. 30. for απρεσωλληψια, r. απρεσωπολληψια. p. 57. l. 26. for 1 *Job*. 5. 23. r. 1 *Job*. 3. 23. p. 67. l. 11. for *Job*, 14, 15, 16. r. *Job*. 14. 16, 17. p. 72. l. 20. for as as, r. is as. Mis-pointings require pardon of course. ×

EIPHNOMAXIA.

THE Agreement and Distance OF BRETHREN.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation.

ABout this, our Brethren and we agree in these Particulars.

Particulars of Agreement about the first Head of Doctrine.

1. *That the Scripture expressly holdeth forth, and asserteth, both a Decree of Election, and a Decree also of Reprobation, in God.*
2. *That these Decrees were in God from Eternity, or before the Foundations of the World were laid.*
3. *That both these Decrees, as well as all others attributable unto God, are really and simply God himself.*
4. *That these Decrees, as all others in God, are like God himself, absolutely immutable and unchangeable.*

5. *That God acteth nothing in time, in order to the Execution of his Decrees, but what he decreed, at least in the general, or in the rule by which he acteth, to act or do, from Eternity.*

6. *That God actually Electeth, and so actually Reprobateth, only in Time, and not from Eternity* a.

a Dr. *Prideaux Lect. 1. De absoluto Decreto.*

7. *That the number of those already Elected, and that will be Elected hereafter, (as likewise of those already Reprobated, and that will be Reprobated hereafter) is certainly known unto God.*

8. *That there can no moving cause from without, or in the creature, be assigned of Gods Decree, either of Election or Reprobation.*

9. *That the end of the Decree of Election, is the manifestation or praise of the rich and free Grace of God.*

10. *That God, when he Electeth unto Salvation, doth not Elect qualities, but persons only.*

Particulars of Dissent about the first Head of Doctrine.

The particulars wherein we dissent about this head of Doctrine, are these.

1. We hold and teach, That God hath not decreed from Eternity to Elect any person of Mankind upon any terms, but that, in case he liveth to years of discretion, he may very possibly perish, notwithstanding any such Decree: Our Brethren hold and teach the contrary.

2. We hold, That God hath not decreed from

from Eternity the Reprobation of any person of mankind, considered as such, who may not very possibly be saved, any Decree in God notwithstanding; much less do we hold a Decree of Reprobation from Eternity, against the far greatest part of mankind, excluding a possibility of their Salvation. Our Brethren hold the contrary.

3. We hold, That God hath not decreed the Reprobation of any Infant dying before the commission of actual sin. Our Brethren affirm it.

4. We hold, That Faith and Repentance in particular persons, are not the fruits, or effects of Election, but Election rather the fruit of these. The sense of our Brethren is herein also contrary to us.

5. We hold, That the only Decree of Election, that can be asserted from the Scriptures, is this (for substance and effect,) *Whosoever believeth, shall be saved*; as the only Decree of Reprobation, this; *Whosoever believeth not, shall be damned.* Our Brethren cannot (it seems) accord with us in either.

6. We hold, That the Intent, at least the primary or antecedent Intent of God in his Decree of Reprobation, is the Salvation, not the Condemnation, of men. Our Brethren differ much from us in this likewise.

Reasons of our Dissent in these particulars, are,

Reasons of Dissent in the first particular.

1. We judge, That the threatnings of Damnation in the Scriptures, denounced to and against Believers, in case of Apostacy, or turning aside into any the ways of the wickedness of the World, as well as against the ungodly & unbelieving, to be absolutely inconsistent with a peremptory Intent in him that thus threateneth, especially with a signification of such an Intent in him, unto those who are thus threatened by him, to confer Salvation upon them, See *Ezek.* 18. 24. *Mat.* 18. 3. compared with vers. 1. *Rom.* 8. 13. compared with *Rom.* 1. 6, 7, 8. (with many more places of like import.) Even as we judge it a very senseless part in a Father, to give his child a compleat assurance under hand and seal, that he will make him his heir, against all possible interveniences whatsoever, and yet presently threaten him, that unless he shall behave himself dutifully, he will certainly disinherit him.

2. We judge, That, in case any person were so adjudged to eternal life from Eternity by any Decree of God, that there is no possibility of his miscarrying, there were no necessity or occasion of Christs dying for him. For we cannot conceive how any more just, equitable, or compleat title to an inheritance or possession, should accrue unto any man, than by the adjudication of the same unto him, by such a person, who hath an absolute and unquestionable right to dispose of the same as he pleaseth, and

to

to confer it upon whom he will. So that our ſenſe is, That ſuch an Election is extreamly injurious to the death of *Chriſt*, and utterly diſſolveth the neceſſity of it. *a*

a See more of this, *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 461.

3. We judge ſuch an Election, to be an open Enemie unto Godlineſs, and conſequently to be Anti-Evangelical, inaſmuch as the Goſpel, is (according to the Apoſtles definition, or deſcription of it) *a Doctrine according unto Godlineſs, i. e.* calculated and contrived in all the veins, parts, and members of it, for the advancement of *Godlineſs* in the World. For we cannot conceive but that ſuch a notion as this planted in the Judgements and Souls of men, *viz.* that if the uttermoſt of what they are able to do in ſerving and pleaſing God, will ſave them, the loweſt and ſlighteſt ſtrain, or degree in either, will as certainly do it alſo, (which is the natural and expreſs reſult, or conſequence of ſuch an Election) muſt needs make men very remiſs, looſe, and indifferent in the ſervice of God. For who will ſtrain and toyl himſelf in running for ſuch a prize, which he knows he ſhall as certainly obtain, by going an eaſie, ſoft, and ordinary pace?

1 Tim. 6. 3.

4. We conceive that ſuch a notion of Election as we now oppoſe, laies the honour, yea, and far the greateſt part (if not the whole) of the neceſſity of that great Ordinance of God, the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, in the duſt. For if the Elect (ſo called) ſhall as certainly be ſaved (and conſequently

be prepared and made meet for Salvation; for without this no man shall be saved,) by a weak, simple, yea or corrupt Ministry, yea, and this (it may be) enjoyed but a day or two in all a mans life, or loosly and negligently attended upon whilst it may be had, as well as by a Ministry-learned, lively, and faithful, and the most diligent and conscientious attending hereon, wherein is the Ministry of the Gospel to be esteemed? Or of what great consequence unto the World, are the richest gifts, as of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, utterance, faithfulness, zeal, &c. for the Ministry of the Gospel, if all those who are in any possibility of being saved by them, may, and shall as certainly be saved without them? Or upon what account can men be urged and pressed by Ministers, as commonly they are, to a frequent, diligent, constant, serious, careful, and conscientious attendance upon the Ministry, if Salvation, and consequently, preparations and meetness for Salvation, shall as certainly be obtained, by a broken, careless, and superficial attendance in this kind?

5. Such an Election as we contend against, we judge to be most unworthy the most excellent Nature of God, and at manifest defiance with sundry his greatest Attributes and Perfections; as, *viz.* Wisdom, Holiness, Mercy, Justice, &c. We shall instance only in the two former (at present:) Such an Election is inconsistent with his Wisdom,

dom, because it supposeth him to project such a design for the manifestation of his Grace, Mercy, (as also of his Justice) which is unproper and differvent hereunto. For, doth it argue any soveraign or high strain, any super-abounding richness of grace or mercy in any man, when ten thousand persons have equally offended him, only to pardon one or two of them, and make these great, and in the mean time implacably resolve to punish, yea, torment all the rest to the utmost extremity of their demerit, and this against all possible interveniency of sorrow or repentance for their offence? Again, such an Election we conceive to be notoriously inconsistent with the Holiness of God, because it representeth him unto the World, as irreversibly resolved to make only a few persons (comparatively) happy, and this whether they shall labour and spin, or no, and to leave the generality or great body of mankind in such a condition of despair, wherein it is not lightly possible that their hand should be strengthened unto holiness. And doubtless it is repugnant unto *holiness* in any person, especially unto *Holiness* in any great exaltation, to go so to work in any kind, as to discourage the far greatest part of men in the World about him from *holiness*, or to put them into such a condition, wherein it is not possible for them to be *holy*. How much more, in case it be supposed that this man hath an opportunity before him to give them all high and

worthy encouragements unto Holineſs, and this without the leaſt loſs, prejudice, or inconvenience to himſelf?

6. We read but only of one Decree of Election in the Scriptures: whereas we judge that ſuch a kind of Election, as our Brethren hold forth in oppoſition to us, ſuppoſeth as great a number of Decrees of Election, as there are perſons to be Elected. For *Peter*'s Election (for example) doth not include, or ſuppoſe either *David*'s or *Abraham*'s Election. So that unleſs *David* (and ſo *Abraham*) be Elected, by a Decree of Election appropriate to himſelf, he cannot be ſuppoſed, according to that form of Election which we are now breaking in pieces, to be Elected at all. Nor can it reaſonably be ſaid, that the whole number of the Elect, how many ſoever they be, may be all included in one and the ſame Decree of Election, unleſs it be ſuppoſed that this one is equivalently, and in ſubſtance, many; Which we conceive cannot be proved of that Decree of Election, which the Scripture countenanceth.

7. We conceive, that all the paſſages and Texts of Scripture, which our Brethren are wont to produce and argue for the eſtabliſhment of their Election, as *Rom.* 9. 11, 12, *&c. Act.* 13. 48. *Eph.* 1. 4, 11, &c. (with the reſt) are meerly irrelative to ſuch a purpoſe, all forced againſt their native and proper imports (reſpectively) to ſerve in this warfare, being all very capable of a more ortho-

orthodox, fair, and *Christian* Interpretation, than that which they make subservient to their Opinion.

8. We find no competent, indeed no tolerable satisfaction in any of those Arguments, which our Brethren are wont to levy and insist upon for the defence of their Doctrine of Election; and judge in our Souls and Consciences that we are able to give a rational, fair, and *Christian* account of their insufficiency and weakness.

9. Lastly, We are the more confirmed in our dislike of their Opinion about Election, because we very frequently find, and meet with, from the pens and mouths of those that are counted pillars of the said Opinion, such things, which are palpably inconsistent therewith: which to us plainly shews, that their Doctrine of Election encumbreth and thwarteth many wholsom and necessary Truths in *Christian* Religion, and that many orthodox and worthy Doctrines cannot be pertinently and effectually managed, without the influence and aid of this our Principle, That there is no Election, or Decree of Election, of particular persons, as such, but only of an entire *species* of men, from Eternity.

Reasons of Dissent in the second particular.

Of our dissent in the second particular expressed, some of our Grounds and Reasons, are these,

1. We judge, that when God professeth thus, *I have no pleasure in the death of him that dyeth* a; and again, when he interro-

a Ezek. 18. 32.

gates

gates thus: *Have I any pleaſure at all that the wicked ſhould dye, and not that he ſhould return from his waies, and live?*

b Verſe 23: b And yet again, when he proteſteth and ſweareth, *As I live, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that*

c Ezek. 33.11. *the wicked turn from his way, and live* c; we judge (we ſay) that the ever gracious and bleſſed God doth not in any of, much leſs in all theſe paſſages expreſs himſelf ironically, or antiphraſtically, but declareth his very heart and ſoul towards, and concerning wicked men in general: and conſequently that ſuch profeſſions and proteſtations from him as theſe, are ſignally incomportant with any purpoſe or intention in him from Eternity to deſtroy them, or any of them, conſidered as men, yea, or ſimply as wicked, unbelieving, or impenitent, but only as perſevering ſuch unto the end; which yet no Decree of his neither doth any waies neceſſitate them unto.

2. We judge alſo, thoſe moſt pathetical, affectionate, and bowels-breathing wiſhes, or deſires of God for the peace and proſperity even of the vileſt and worſt-deſerving men, mentioned *Deut.* 5. 29. *Pſal.* 81. 13, 14, *&c.* *Iſa.* 48. 18. *Jer.* 44. 4. *Mat.* 23. 37. to be utterly inconſiſtent with ſuch a bowel-leſs and mercileſs Reprobation of far the greateſt part of mankind, as our Brethren allow and teach.

3. We conceive ſuch a Reprobation to con-

contain in it a very fiery and notorious antipathy and contrariety to thoſe impreſſions of love, tenderneſs, and care, which God hath planted in the natures of all living creatures towards their young ones, the *Oſtrich* only excepted; of whoſe *hardening againſt her young ones, as if they were not hers*, God himſelf giveth this account, *Becauſe God hath deprived her of wiſdom, neither hath he imparted unto her underſtanding.* d So that we cannot but judge, that they that go about to faſten ſuch a Reprobation upon God, as we oppoſe, make him altogether unlike that part of his workmanſhip or creation which himſelf moſt commendeth, and moſt like that only part of it, on which himſelf hath ſet a peculiar brand of ignominy and folly, and this in reſpect of that very property, which ſuch a Reprobation as we ſpeak of chargeth upon him.

d Job. 39. 16, 17.

4. We conceive, that if all living creatures be propenſe in affection, tenderneſs, and care for the preſervation of thoſe which receive being from, and are propagated by them, and God be as hard of bowels, and as implacably bent upon the eternal ruine and torment of the far greater part of men, who are all lineally deſcended from him through the loyns of *Adam*, who was his Son (*Luke* 3. 38.) and this without, and before any cauſe given by them, as our Brethrens Doctrine of Reprobation clearly rendreth him to be; thoſe creatures of his would rather be a diſhonour, prejudice, & reproach

unto

unto him, by those more lovely impressions we spake of, found in them, than a praise or glory unto him by their creation.

5. All particular persons of mankind, without exception of any, were in *Adam* before his Fall: otherwise they could not have fallen in him, or with him. If they were in him before his Fall, they must be in the same state and condition of Righteousness and Holiness with him, and consequently, of grace, favour, and acceptance with God. Now we judge it clearly impossible, that any person should at the same time be in an estate of righteousness, or of grace and favour with God, and yet under a severe Decree of Reprobation also. So that we cannot but conceive such a Decree of Reprobation from Eternity, as our Brethren maintain, to be a meer and plain impossibility.

6. Besides, all particular persons of mankind were in God himself, and in him only, (I mean, in the secret of his Will and Power) before they were in *Adam*, and consequently, were nothing really but God himself, according to the known Maxim universally received by Divines; *Quicquid in Deo est, Deus est*; whatsoever is in God, is God. So that if any person or persons of mankind were Reprobated, or decreed to destruction from Eternity, they must be conceived to lye under this decree, whilst they were yet only in God himself, and consequently, whilst they were nothing but God

God himſelf. And ſo God ſhould be, as well the object, as the ſubject, of his own Reprobation: which we judge to be a kind of blaſphemous impoſſibility; or at leaſt ſhould lie under this his Decree, which mends the matter very little.

7. We further conceive, that ſuch a Decree of Reprobation clearly overthrows the very foundation and ſubſtance of the Goſpel, breaks the very heart and ſoul of it. For we cannot underſtand how God can fairly, or with ſimplicity of Truth, ſay unto all and every perſon of mankind reſpectively, *If thou believeſt, thou ſhalt be ſaved*, in caſe it be ſuppoſed that any of them lie under a peremptory and irreverſible Decree of Reprobation. For if ſo, impoſſible it is that they ſhould be ſaved, yea, though they ſhould believe.

8. We conceive that all thoſe moſt ſweet and gracious applications (frequent in Scripture) made by God unto the generality of wicked and impenitent perſons, in admoniſhing, exhorting, inviting them to Repentance, and this by a moſt loving and free tender of all the great and precious Promiſes unto them, by way of encouragement thereunto, to be notoriouſly inconſiſtent with our Brethrens Decree of Reprobation. And that they who make God to ſpeak ſo graciouſly, and ſo much to the hearts of men, with a doomful Decree of Reprobation in his breaſt againſt them, make him, like the worſt and vileſt of men,

even

even such as *David* describeth: *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oyl, yet were they drawn swords*; Psal. 55. 21.

9. We judge our Brethrens Doctrine of Reprobation, not to be able to stand before that great and most exquisite Touchstone of Doctrines (formerly mentioned) that Description of the Gospel delivered by the Apostle, where he calls it *a Doctrine according to Godliness*: and that it is most pernitiously destructive to the Interest and Advancement of Godliness in the World. For, 1. It presents the Gospel unto men like a lottery, wherein there are many blanks, but few prizes: in which respect, sober and considering men refuse to adventure their money upon it. And, 2. In case of any declining, or miscarriage of men through tentation, it is apt to cast a snare of fear upon them that they are Reprobated, and consequently, that it is in vain for them to seek reconciliation with God, or live holily.

10. We judge such a Decree of Reprobation, to be diametrally repugnant to all those blessed Manifesto's or Declarations made by God himself of the riches of his Grace, Mercy, Love, Kindness, Goodness, Compassion, Patience, Long-sufferance, Bounty, unto the World. See *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. *Psal.* 86 15. and 111. 4. *Joh.* 3. 16. *Tit.* 3. 4. *Psal.* 145. 8, 9. (To omit other places without number.)

11. We

11. We cannot find any mention, nor the leaſt intimation of any ſuch Decree of Reprobation in the Scriptures. Nor doth our Brethrens Doctrine it ſelf of Election, were it granted for truth, neceſſarily draw after it any ſuch Reprobation, as they notion unto us, however in their apprehenſions (we preſume) it doth. For otherwiſe we gather by many things occaſionally coming from them, that they would willingly enough let go their Doctrine of Reprobation, if they knew how to retain their Doctrine of Election without it. But a man may invite twenty perſons, or more, to a Feaſt, and ſend a Coach and Horſe to fetch three, five, or any leſs number of them, and yet leave the other in a capacity to come on foot, or otherwiſe.

12. We clearly, and very frequently find, both in the Writings, and oral Diſcourſes of the Patrons of the ſaid Decree of Reprobation, ſuch ſayings and paſſages, which we know not how to reconcile with this Decree: and conſequently cannot but judge ſuch a Decree to be very diſ-harmonious to the true ſtrains and Doctrines of the Goſpel.

Our Reaſons of Diſſent in the third particular expreſſed, are;

Reaſons of Diſſent in the third particular.

1. We judge that the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 5. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. comparing the vertue, or ſaving tendency of the Grace, or Gift of *Chriſt*, with the condemning force or power of *Adam*'s ſin, maketh them adequate, and

and commensurable in their extent, and in respect of the number of persons related unto, by the one, and by the other; only giving the precedency or preheminence of operativeness, or potency of working, unto the gift and grace of Christ. Which we conceive cannot stand, if it shall be supposed that *Adam*'s sin reacheth all men without exception with the condemning force or influence thereof, and the gift or grace of *Christ* but a few (comparatively.) Our Doctrine in this point is argued, and proved more at large from this contexture of Scriptures, by one of us, elsewhere. a

a *Redempt. Redeemed*, p. 108, 109, &c. 493, 494, &c. 515, 516, &c.

2. When our Saviour, having taken a little child, and set him in the midst of his Disciples, speaking thus unto them, *Who so shall receive one such little child in my Name, receiveth me* b; we conceive that he clearly supposeth all children to belong unto him, and to be interessed in that Redemption which cometh by him. Otherwise, how should a child be said to be received in in *Christ*'s Name, *i. e.* to be looked upon, to be respected, and tendred, as one of those for whom He vouchsafed to shed his Blood?

b Mar. 18. 5.

3. When the Lord *Christ* saith elsewhere to his Disciples, *Suffer little children to come unto me*, giving this reason for it, *for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*, (Mat. 19. 14. Mark 10. 14. *Luke* 18. 16.) We conceive that he clearly avoucheth the happy estate of Infants, whilst such, (and consequently, their non-

non-reprobation by God.) And thus both *Calvin* himself, and *Musculus*, (two of our best and most orthodox Expositors) understand the place. *In this word, For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*, (saith the former c) *Christ comprehends as well little children themselves, as those that are like unto them.* The latter hath these words upon the place (among many others of like import,) *In saying*, For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, *he saith more, than if he had said*, of these: *so far is it from being true, that he spake less to the commendation of children*, by saying, *of Such* d. The reason hereof he had expressed immediately before. A little after, he speaks yet somewhat higher to the point: *We see here that Infants are the more chief or principal in the Kingdom of God: so far is it from truth, that they are not at all partakers thereof* e.

c *Hac voce, tam parvulos, quam eorum similes comprehendit.* Calv. *Harm. in Mat.* 19.14.

d *Multo plus est ergo quod dicit, Talium, quam si dixisset, illorum; tam abest, ut minus dixerit ad commendationem parvulorum.*

4. Some Infants, dying in their Infancy, our Brethren themselves acknowledge to be Elect, and consequently, saved. Now we, knowing, 1. the just and merciful God to be *no Accepter of Persons*; 2. The case of all Infants, as well to matter of righteousness, as of sin, or guilt of sin, to be the same; 3. (And lastly) that as well remission of sins, and the Salvation of persons thereupon, as the retaining of sins, and Condemnation upon it, to be judiciary acts of God, proceeding from him as a most righteous Judge, cannot but conceive, that if some Infants, dying Infants, be saved,

e *Videmus autem hic potiores esse in regno Dei Infantes; tam abest, ut non sintillius participes.*

the ſame muſt needs be the condition of all.

5. We know not how to reconcile the tormenting of millions of poor Infants, who never provoked God by any actual ſin, with that *Philanthropy*, thoſe tender mercies, bowels, and compaſſions, that great propenſion and readineſs to pardon, which the Scriptures ſo frequently, and with ſuch expreſsneſs of words, depredicate in God.

6. We meet with nothing throughout the whole Scripture, which miniſtreth any ſufficient ground unto us, on which to build a belief, that any Infant dyeth under any Decree of Reprobation by God. The Scriptures commonly alledged by our Brethren in defence of their Tenent to the contrary, as, *We were by nature children of wrath* f; *Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me* g, (with ſome others,) though they prove Original ſin, (which in an orthodox and Scripture-ſenſe we deny not, as ſome, it ſeems, miſ-report us,) yet do no waies evince or prove, but that they, who by nature, [*i. e.* upon the account of their natural deſcent or propagation from the firſt *Adam*] are *children of wrath*, may, by the ſupervening of the gift and grace of the ſecond *Adam*, be children of delight and acceptation; as thoſe (it ſeems) were, whom the Lord *Chriſt* (this ſecond *Adam*) took up into his arms.

f Eph. 2. 3.

g Pſalm 51. 5.

See *Redempt. Redeemed*, P. 518, 519.

7. We judge, that all thoſe Scriptures and

and grounds, which hold forth, and prove the universality of Atonement made by *Christ* in his Death (for which we shall, God willing, account in the next Chapter) do evince the safe estate and condition of all children dying before the commission of actual sin.

8. Lastly, We meet with many very pregnant and expres's acknowledgments, or assertions, of that which we maintain for Truth in this particular, in the Writings of the greatest Masters and Defenders (at least so esteemed) of the contrary Faith, as of *Calvin*, *Musculus*, and others. By the light whereof to us it plainly appeareth, That our sense in the business is so rational, so obvious, and neer at hand, to the considerate thoughts of men, that ever and anon they meet with it; not knowing how with Honour or Conscience to avoid it.

See Redempt. Redeemed, p. 552, 553, &c. 110, 111, 112.

Reasons of our Dissent in the fourth particular mentioned, are these.

Reasons of Dissent in the fourth particular.

1. Our Brethren holding with us (as hath been noted) that there is no Election of persons, but in Time, though the Decree of Election be from Eternity; we cannot conceive what should, or can, reasonably determine the time, when this Election should be made (at least in persons living to years of discretion,) but only their Faith in the first raising it in the Soul: and that upon their believing, and not before, they are numbred amongst the Elect of God.

2. We do not remember, that any per-

ſon or perſons, are in Scripture termed the Elect of God, (we mean, with that kind of Election which is unto Salvation, or Eternal Life,) but only thoſe who do believe: and Believers we obſerve to be thus ſtiled frequently; *Matth.* 24. 31. *Luke* 18. 7. *Rom.* 8. 33. *Coloſ.* 3. 12. 2 *Joh.* 1. and 13, &c.

3. The Apoſtle *Peter* ſtileth the Saints to whom he writeth, *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience, and ſprinkling of the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt.* Now we conceive that the Apoſtles meaning in theſe words, is, That they were *Elect* [*i. e.* choſen by God unto Salvation] *through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling, &c. i. e.* by means of that gracious work of the Spirit upon them, whereby they were brought to obey the Goſpel, and to believe in Jeſus Chriſt; and that their Election in this kind, and according to theſe terms, was *according to the foreknowledge* [or rather, Fore-approbation, as the word in the Original frequently ſignifyeth] *of God the Father*; meaning that God the Father had from Eternity purpoſed to Elect ſuch perſons unto Life and Salvation, as they now were, by means of the ſaid ſanctifying work of the Spirit in, and upon them. This to be the true ſenſe and meaning of this paſſage of Scripture, one of us hath ſhewed and proved elſewhere more at large *a*.

a Redempt. Redeemed, p. 463.

4. Laſtly, What our Brethren, or men of their

their Judgement in this point of difference, are wont to produce (at leaſt as far as we have had opportunity to obſerve) either from the Scriptures, or otherwiſe, for the countenance of their ſenſe in the buſineſs, is no waies ſatisfactory, or convincing to us. When the Apoſtle ſaith, *According as he hath choſen* [*i. e.* decreed to chuſe *] *us in him before the foundation of the World, that we ſhould be holy* b, &c. He ſpeaks of the continuance and encreaſe of Holineſs in thoſe who are Believers, which God expecteth from them upon the account of that gracious Decree of his from Eternity, concerning the chuſing or deſigning ſuch perſons as they now were, to Salvation; of the benefit and bleſſing of which Decree they were now through his grace made partakers by their being *in him*, [*viz.* in *Chriſt*, through Faith.] He doth not ſpeak of Holineſs, either as already wrought in them by God, or as intended to be wrought in them, either infallibly, or irreſiſtibly, becauſe he had choſen, or elected them; but as a fruit or equitable return expected by God from them, of the grace of Election, which they had received through believing. But of the mind of the Holy Ghoſt in this Text of Scripture, one of us hath elſewhere given a large and full account c.

Our Diſſent from our Brethren in the fifth particular expreſſed, ſtandeth upon theſe grounds.

1. We do not find that either the Lord

* The purpoſes and intentions of God concerning ſuch and ſuch Acts or Diſpenſations, are very uſually expreſſed by the names of the Acts or Diſpenſations themſelves. See *Redempt. Redeemed*, p. 462.

b Eph. 1. 4.

c *Redempt. Redeemed*, p. 461, 462.

Reaſons of Diſſent in the fifth particular.

Christ himself, or any of his Apostles, preached any other Decree, either of Election or Reprobation, but only these: And these they often, yea constantly preached, either in form and expresness of words, or in substance and import of matter. Places are obvious.

2. We judge, that if there be any other Decree, either of Election or Reprobation, besides these, either they must be parts and members of the Gospel, or not. If so, we desire our Brethren to shew us where they are taught, either by *Christ*, or any his Apostles. *Paul* approved himself to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, upon this account, that he had *not shunned to declare all the Counsel of God unto them.* Yet do we not find in his Epistle to this Church, (nor indeed in any other) the least mention, or intimation of any other Decree, either of the one kind, or the other, but only those specified. If those other Decrees of Election, and Reprobation (supposed, and held forth for such, by our Brethren) be no parts, nothing of the Gospel, how come they to pretend and say, that they, either the one, or the other of them, are delivered and taught, especially as such high, mysterious, and necessary Doctrines in the Gospel?

3. Those other Decrees of Election and Reprobation (so called by our Brethren) are so far from being either parts, members, branches, or appurtenances of the Gospel, that as far as we are able to conceive or consider

ſider of them, their faces are ſet towards another intereſt diametrally oppoſite to that of the Goſpel. Hereof we have given ſome account already in our grounds of diſſent upon the two firſt particulars of this preſent head of Doctrine.

4. Any other Decree of Election, or Reprobation, beſides thoſe owned and aſſerted by us, and more particularly, thoſe framed and taught for Doctrines under ſuch a notion, by our Brethren, we judge altogether unworthy God. Nor can we reliſh or taſte the leaſt ſavour, eſpecially in that of Reprobation, of any thoſe moſt glorious and bleſſed Attributes or Perfections of the Divine Being, as either Holineſs, Mercy, Juſtice, Goodneſs, Wiſdom, or any other.

5. Again, that there are no other Decrees of Election and Reprobation, but thoſe ſpecified and acknowledged by us, and more eſpecially that the Decrees of this denomination levied by our Brethren, are ſhadows of mountains, not men, humane, and not divine conceptions, thoſe endleſs digladiations and irreconcilable diviſions amongſt themſelves about aſſigning or ſtating the object of theſe Decrees, are an abundant confirmation unto us.—Some of them hold, that men ſimply and indefinitely conſidered, are the object of theſe Decrees.—Others contend, that men conſidered as yet to be created, or made, are this object.—A third ſort ſtands up againſt both the former with this notion, that men

considered as already created and made, are this object.—A fourth disparageth the conjectures of the three former, with this conceit, that men considered as fallen, are the said object. Another findeth a defect in the singleness or simplicity of all the former Opinions, and compoundeth this in opposition to them, that men considered, both as to be created, and as being created, and as fallen, together, are the proper object of those troublesome Decrees.—A sixth sort formeth us yet another object, and this is, men considered as salvable, or capable of being saved. A seventh, not liking the faint complexions of all the former opinions, delivereth us this, as strong and healthful; *viz.* that men considered as damnable, or capable of damnation, are this object. Others yet again, super-fancying all the former, conceit men considered as creable, or possible to be created, to be the object so highly contested about. A ninth party gives the preheminence to their sense, who disciple the World with this Doctrine, that men considered as *labiles*, or capable of falling, are the object of those men-confounding, and God-abasing Decrees.—A tenth squadron, coming up in the rear of all the former, supposeth that they all left the Truth behind them, and that themselves have gathered it up, in this notion; *viz.* that men considered as repairable, or capable of restauration, are the Object of that Predestination, which men have laboured to

build

build up, and yet could never agree about the materials. And whether all the ſcattered and conflicting Opinions about the Object of our Brethrens Decrees of Election and Reprobation, be bound up in this bundle, or no, we cannot ſay; we are rather negatively inclined. However, by thoſe uncouth diſtractions and interferings in opinion amongſt them, where, or how, to bottom their ſaid pretended Decrees, we are jealous with a very great jealouſie, that neither they, nor any others, are able to find ſo much as an inch of firm ground whereon to build them.

6. Laſtly, that extream tenderneſs, lothneſs, and averſneſs, which we find in many of the moſt judicious and conſiderate Patrons of the ſaid Decrees, to be put upon any through explication of themſelves about their Decree of Reprobation, thoſe many cautions, limitations, and proviſo's, which commonly they premiſe before they come to expreſs their minds touching the ſame, the manifold pleas and pretences they uſe, either to excuſe themſelves from ſpeaking plainly, particularly, and diſtinctly in the buſineſs, or elſe to ſalve and colour what they fear they ſhall ſpeak to the regret and offence of the Reaſons, Judgements, and Conſciences of men, as, that the Scriptures ſpeak very ſparingly, or very obſcurely about Reprobation, That the Doctrine thereof is very myſterious and profound, That men muſt not wade too deep into the ſecrets of God,

God, That men must submit their Reasons, Judgements, and Understandings to the will of God, though to their apprehensions there is neither reason, justice, or equity in that, which they obtrude upon them for the will of God in this kind, with many the like; these things (we say) are strong symptoms unto us of the crazy constitution of their Decree of Reprobation (and of Election, consequently, at least as themselves notion the dependance between them) and that no such Decree hath either footing or foundation in the Scriptures. For if Reprobation be any part of the counsel, especially of the Evangelical counsel, of God, why should the Ministers of the Gospel more shun to declare it, use more *ambages* and circumlocutions when they are to preach and publish it, than any other branch, or Doctrine of the Gospel? nay, the truth is, whensoever they preach it, they preach it, as if they preached it not, or cared not whether they preach it or no: they never preach, or shew it with open face.

Reasons of Dissent in the sixt and last particular.

We dissent from our Brethren in the sixt and last particular, for these Reasons.

1. We judge that the Apostle *Paul* made use of Gods Decree of Reprobation, for the advancement and security of his Salvation, where he expresseth himself thus: *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I my self should be* [or rather

1 Cor. 9. 27.

ther, ſhould become, γενωμαι ἀδόκιμος, *a Reprobate*, or caſt-away. Doubtleſs he was not in the leaſt afraid of becoming *a Reprobate*, but only according to Gods Decree of Reprobation. Nor can we conceive, that he ſhould either miſ-underſtand, or miſ-uſe, pervert, or miſ-apply this Decree, in converting it to ſo happy and bleſſed an uſe, or end, as the *keeping under his body*, &c. and this in order to his Salvation.

2. We judge that many thouſands of thoſe Saints, who have died in the Faith, and ſo are ſaved, have been awakened to Repentance, and ſeeking after God, by the terrible alarm of Gods Decree of Reprobation, and by conſidering what God hath declared againſt perſons found impenitent, and unbelieving, as, *viz.* that they ſhall be damned. Even as his intent in his Decree concerning the Deſtruction of *Niniveh* within forty daies, by means of the preaching of it to this City by *Jonah*, was the preſerving of this City from deſtruction, at leaſt at that time.

3. We cannot judge that Gods intentions, or ends, in his penal Statutes or Decrees, ſhould differ from the intentions of the beſt of Law-givers amongſt men, in their penal conſtitutions. It is a clear caſe, that the primary intent of penal Legiſlation, is not the puniſhment of thoſe that ſhall tranſgreſs the Law, but the prevention of the tranſgreſſion of the Law, and conſequently not only of the puniſhment of him

See Redempt. Redeemed, p. 479.

him that tranſgreſſeth, conſidered ſimply as a man, or as a member of the Common-wealth, and as not having yet tranſgreſſed; but of the ſorrow, trouble, and civil diſquietment alſo, as well of him (under the conſiderations ſpecified) as of all other Members of the ſame civil community with him. And there is little queſtion to be made, but that by means of the penal Laws, wiſely provided and eſtabliſhed in every Common-wealth or State, the diſturbers of the peace and proſperity thereof are fewer than otherwiſe they would be; and conſequently, many preſerv'd and kept from evil practices, who otherwiſe were likely to be enſnared by them.

4. We judge, that the Goſpel, not only in ſome, or in many, but univerſally in all, and every part, vein and branch of it, and conſequently in the Doctrine of Reprobation it ſelf, delivered there, is moſt exactly calculated and compoſed for the advancement of Godlineſs in the World, according to that brief deſcription of it (formerly mentioned,) 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. where it is ſtiled, *The Doctrine which is according to Godlineſs.* Now that which clearly and directly tends to the advancement of Godlineſs amongſt men, muſt of neceſſity tend after the ſame manner to the ſalvation of men.

5. Again, as every pair of the Diſciples, which our Saviour ſent forth two by two, to preach the Goſpel, accorded in their work, each labouring to advance the ſame buſineſs

buſineſs and end with his fellow; in like manner we conceive that the Lord *Chriſt*, having divided the body and ſubſtance of his Goſpel into theſe two parts; *He that believeth, ſhall be ſaved*, and *He that believeth not, ſhall be damned*, could not but intend, that both of them ſhould be ſubſervient unto, and carry on one and the ſame deſign in the World, and not be divided in their ends. If then the primary and antecedent Councel and purpoſe of God clearly be, by the promiſſory part of the Goſpel, *He that believes, ſhall be ſaved*, to advance the ſalvation of men, and not the condemnation, evident (to us) it is, that it is his Councel and purpoſe to do it alſo by the other.

6. Laſtly, We conceive that the threatning, or fore-warning a perſon, that ſuch or ſuch an evil or miſery will certainly befall him, upon ſuch or ſuch a neglect and miſcarriage of himſelf, is as proper and direct a courſe, as well can be taken, to conſult the ſafety and freedom of this perſon from the ſaid evil, and miſery. And conſequently, when God threatneth and denounceth damnation unto men, for the neglect of that great Salvation, which he ſendeth unto them, and for their unbelief, we judge that his clear and direct intentions are by the mediation of ſuch a threatning, to prevent this damnation, and conſequently to procure and bring about their Salvation.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the second Head of Doctrine propounded, The DEATH of CHRIST.

Agreement in particulars about the Death of Christ.

1. OUR Brethren hold and teach, *That Christ died sufficiently for all men, without exception:* herein we fully accord with them.

2. They hold, *That some benefit was intended by God in the death of Christ, for all men, without exception:* this also we hold as fast as they.

3. They hold, *That whosoever believeth in Christ, shall not perish through any want of attonement made, or of Redemption purchased, by the death of* Christ *for them.* In this likewise we give the right hand of fellowship unto them.

4. They affirm, *That whosoever perisheth, perisheth not through any defect in the death of* Christ, *but for his sins, and through his unbelief.* This both they and we affirm together.

5. They say, *That all Men shall not be saved by the death of* Christ: We are one in sense with them in this particular also.

6. Their Doctrine is, *That forgiveness of sins and salvation, are to be offered in the Ministry of the Gospel, freely unto all Men, (as such) without exception, upon the account of the death of* Christ. This also

ſo we imbrace as Orthodox with them.

But as we agree in all theſe particulars, about the death of Chriſt, ſo we diſſent in ſome others.

Particulars of diſſent about the Death of Chriſt.

1. Our Brethren maintain, *That Chriſt according to the Counſel and intentions of God, died only for the ſalvation of a certain determinate number of men, and theſe very few (comparatively) whom they call* The Elect: *and that there was no attonement, or Redemption, made or purchaſed by his death, for any other.* In this we cannot joyn judgements with them.

2. They hold, *That there is no perſon, for whom Chriſt died, that ſhall, or can periſh.* We are in this alſo contrary minded.

3. They teach, *That* Chriſt *by his death, purchaſed and procured at the hand of God the Father, the gift of Faith and Repentance for all thoſe, for whom he died, to be actually conferred upon them in time, againſt all poſſible interveniences on their part whatſoever.* Neither will our Conſciences ſuffer us to ſay *Amen* to this Doctrine.

Our Reaſons of diſſent in the firſt of theſe particulars are;

Reaſons of diſſent in the particulars mentioned about the Death of *Chriſt.*

1. We judge the Scriptures, both Texts and Contents, be very plain, pregnant and expreſs, in aſſerting this Doctrine, that *Chriſt* died for all, and for every man, as in theſe places (beſides many others,) 1 *Tim.* 2. 6. *Heb.* 2. 9. *Tit.* 2. 11. 1 *Joh.* 2. 2. *Joh.* 3. 16. *Joh.* 1. 29, *&c.*

2. We do not find in Scripture, that *Chriſt*

Christ is any where said to have died for any man, for whose salvation he died not. Nor can we judge it a thing any waies probable in it self, that *Christ* should dye for any inferior accommodation of such persons, for whose salvation he should yet refuse, or not deign, to dye.

3. The contrary Doctrine, *viz.* That *Christ* died for the Elect only, or only for those that shall *in fine* be actually saved, or the like, we find no where delivered in any such expressness of terms in the Scriptures. And for those consequences, or argumentations from some Scriptures, by which our Brethren endeavour to establish the said Doctrine, we apprehend them to be very invalid, and unconcluding; and that those Texts of Scripture (respectively) from whence they pretend legitimacy of descent, know them not, but reject their claim, as being aliens and strangers unto them. And we humbly conceive, that we are able to demonstrate upon evident and clear grounds, the invalidity of them.

4. When the plain, obvious, literal, and Grammatical sense of Scripture, doth not obviate, or fall foul upon, either some Article of Faith, or some other passage of Scripture, or the scope and *Series* of the context, or some clear and sound Principle in reason, we judge that it ought not to be declin'd, but to be preferr'd before any other sense, or interpretation whatsoever. Upon this account we conceive, that our

sense

ſenſe of the Scriptures pointed at in the firſt particular of our preſent diſſent, which importeth *Chriſts* dying for all men, being plain, literal, and Grammatical, and every waies conditioned, as hath been expreſſed, ought to be received.

5. We are not able to conceive, how the Goſpel can with ſimplicity, truth, and clearneſs of ſenſe and notion, be preached unto every creature under heaven, in this or any like tenor of words, *If thou believeſt, thou ſhalt be ſaved*, unleſs it be granted and ſuppoſed, that *Chriſt* died for all, and every man, or in caſe it ſhould be ſaid to any man, for whom *Chriſt* did not die, *If thou believeſt, thou ſhalt be ſaved*: ſuch a ſaying cannot be juſtified, nor avouched for truth; becauſe where a Commodity is not, it cannot be had upon any condition or terms whatſoever. Now certain it is, that there is no ſalvation in *Chriſt* for any man, but only for thoſe, for whom he died. Therefore to encourage ſuch a man to believe, for whom *Chriſt* died not, by ſaying unto him, that in caſe he believes, he ſhall be ſaved, is but to feed him with aſhes, or to make him glad with lies. For how ſhould ſuch a man be ſaved, yea, though he ſhould believe, for whom there was no ſalvation purchaſed by *Chriſt*; eſpecially conſidering that his believing in *Chriſt*, would not inveſt *Chriſt* with any more ſalvation, than was in him before, and conſequently, whether he believed, or no? The Synod of *Dort* it

(a) See Redemption Redeemed, p. 547.

ſelf, in ſome of its Members, ſaw and acknowledged the convincing force of this Argument *a*; though their heart (it ſeemeth) ſerved them not to diſpleaſe their Company for the truth's ſake.

5. We judge, that our Brethrens Doctrine, aſſerting that *Chriſt* dyed only for thoſe few, who will (in concluſion) be actually ſaved, will not abide the touch of that golden Touch-ſtone of Doctrines (mentioned once and again before) the deſcription of the Goſpel, delivered by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. If a Miniſter of the Goſpel ſhould go and preach this Doctrine to a numerous Auditory of ſouls, That God hath given his Son Jeſus *Chriſt* to dye for the ſalvation only of a ſmall handful of men and women in the World (comparatively) and that none of them, who were now before him, had any certainty, that they or any of them, were of this number; yea, and that the beſt amongſt men, had very little ground to hope or think that he ſhould be one of theſe few, and that the reſt of mankind, let them do the beſt that they are able, ſhall notwithſtanding be certainly damned; (for all this is nothing but the evident and expreſs import of our Brethrens Doctrine:) muſt not ſuch a Meſſage as this, being believed, directly cauſe a fearful diſpondency of heart and ſoul, a general hanging down of hands amongſt them, a quenching of all deſires, and conſequently of all endeavours, either

to

to apply themſelves to the means of believing, or to the exerciſing of themſelves unto godlineſs in one kind or other? Or doth ſuch a Doctrine as this any waies agree with that Declaration, which the Angel made concerning the Goſpel unto the Shepheards; *Fear not, for behold I bring you good tydings of* Great Joy, *that ſhall be to* All *people* (b.) This Reaſon is further argued by one of us elſe-where (c.)

(b) *Luke* 2. 10.
(c) Redempt. Redeemed, p. 496, 497.

6. We judge that Chriſt died for all thoſe, who ſtand bound to believe, or to depend on him for ſalvation. Becauſe God is never found to encourage, exhort, or call men unto, but conſtantly to diſſwade, and take men off from, vain dependencies, and from truſting in thoſe, whether perſons or things, which are not able, or like to help them. Inſtances hereof, we are able, if need were, to produce very many. Now that all men without exception (conſidered as men) ſtand bound to believe, or depend on *Chriſt* for ſalvation, is to us out of queſtion: and hath by one of us been ſufficiently proved from the Scriptures *a*. Therefore we cannot but judge that he died for all men.

(a) The *Pagans* Debt and Dowry, p. 44, 45, 46, *&c.*

7. That Doctrine which directly tends to ſeparate and divide between the Creature and the Creator (bleſſed for ever) or to create and raiſe jealouſies and hard thoughts in the former againſt the latter, cannot be Evangelical, nor conſonant to the *Truth, which is according to Godlineſs*: But ſuch we judge our Brethrens Doctrine clearly to

be, which denieth Christ's dying for all men without exception. This Argument is further prosecuted, and maintained against all such Objections, which (as we suppose) can with any shew, or colour of reason be made against it, by one of us elsewhere (*b.*)

(b) Redempt. Redeemed, p. 475, 476, &c.

8. If God really and unfeignedly intends, and desires the Salvation of those who perish, then he really intended, in, and by, the death of Christ, the Salvation of all men. The Reason hereof is, because its no mans question, but that he really intends in the death of Christ, the salvation of those who are, or shall be saved. Therefore all men being either such who shall be saved, or who shall not be saved; if he really intends the salvation of these, he must needs intend after the same manner, the salvation of all. Now that God really and unfeignedly intends and desires the salvation of those who perish, is evident to us from these (with many other) Scriptures of like import, *Deut.* 5. 29. *Psal.* 81. 13, 14. *Isa.* 48. 17. *Jer.* 44. 4, 5. *Matth.* 23. 37, &c. This Argument, together with the arguing and opening of these Scriptures, is further urged and insisted upon, and all objections against it answered at large in the late mentioned Book, entituled, *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 470, 471, 472, &c.

9. We conceive that our Brethrens Doctrine, which teacheth that *Christ* died only for a few, is extreamly discouraging both

to

to men and women, from believing, and from applying themſelves, either to a diligent ſearching of the Scriptures, or to the uſe of any other means proper and likely, through the bleſſing of God, to raiſe a work of faith in them: and conſequently we cannot but judge it to be a Doctrine extreamly Anti-Evangelical, the Goſpel every where inviting, perſwading, encouraging; yea, and importuning, all men to believe. For whatſoever breaketh the heart and ſtrength of any mans hope to obtain, diſcouſageth from action, and uſe of means, proportionably.

10. The Scripture comparing the extent of the ſaving gift and grace given by *Chriſt* unto the World, with the extent of the condemning force of *Adam*'s ſin, makes them adequate, and commenſurable the one with the other, in reſpect of the number of perſons, to whom they are reſpectively extended: and comparing them again in the ſtrength or efficaciouſneſs of their reſpective tendencies of the one, to condemn, of the other, to juſtifie and ſave, gives the preheminency, and this with a great ſurpluſſage, unto the gift of *Chriſt*, and the grace given by this gift. Both theſe are evident from the Apoſtles diſcourſe, *Rom.* 5. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. (a) And from both we cannot but reaſon, and conclude thus: As *Adam* ſinned unto all men without exception, involving all men in the guilt of his tranſgreſſion; ſo *Chriſt* was given unto all men,

(a) See theſe Texts argued. Redempt. Redeemed, p. 516, 517, &c.

and all men put into an estate of justification by him. Otherwise the sin of *Adam* must needs be more forcible and prevailing unto condemnation, than the gift of *Christ*, and the grace by this gift, are unto justification.

11. Our Brethren grant that *Christ* died sufficiently for all men, or for the salvation of all men. If so, we cannot conceive but that he must needs dye *intentionally* also for all men. For first, there could be no vertue, value, or sufficiency in *Christ*'s death, but what God *intended* should be in it. Secondly, we cannot conceive how that can be said to be done sufficiently for a man, by which it is unpossible for him to be accommodated, or receive benefit. Nor can we judge any means to be *sufficient* for the obtaining of an end, by which it is unpossible that the end should be obtained. He that gives a poor man, that is ready to perish through hunger, nothing at all out of his abundance, to relieve him, cannot be said to have done that which is sufficient for his relief.

12. The Apostle plainly affirms the Ministry, or *Ministers* of the Gospel, to be *unto God a sweet savour of Christ*, as well *in them that perish, as in those that are saved* (a.) Now we are not able to understand, how the Ministers of the Gospel should be *a sweet* [or the sweet] *savour of Christ unto God, in those who perish*, unless it be supposed that *Christ* died for them. For to what account

(a) 2 *Cor.* 2. 15.

of

of praiſe, or glory unto God, or his grace, in the condemnation of thoſe that periſh, can the preaching of *Chriſt*'s death for thoſe, and only thoſe that are ſaved, turn? we confeſs that *Chriſt*'s *non* dying for wicked men, and ſuch who periſh, if it were a truth, would be a *favour* of ſome *ſweetneſs*, eaſe, or contentment unto theſe men, in their condemnation and puniſhment for ſin; and they might comfort themſelves thus: Had *Chriſt* died for us, as he did for thoſe that are ſaved, we had been both as holy and happy as they; and thus might they truly and clearly reſolve both their ſin and puniſhment into the will of God, yea, into a deficiency or want of love in God towards them, with the juſtification (at leaſt to a very great degree) and comfort of themſelves.

13. If Chriſt ſhall be ſuppoſed to have died only for that ſmall parcel of mankind, which our Brethren tearm the *Elect*, then muſt the world, or mankind, be conceived to have been inveſted with, or put into, a far better eſtate and condition by God in the firſt *Adam*, than in the ſecond. The reaſon hereof is plain. In the firſt *Adam*, the generality of mankind, even all men without exception, were in a good and rich capacity of being happy and bleſſed for ever, having received from God, in him, a ſufficiency of grace and ſtrength, and means, whereby to have obſerved and kept, had themſelves ſo pleaſed, thoſe terms and conditions, the ob-

ſervation whereof God required of them, in order to their happineſs; and upon the performance whereof it was by him promiſed unto them. This is the ſenſe and Doctrine of our Brethren themſelves (generally.) So that in caſe it be ſuppoſed, that the Univerſality (in a manner, and a ſmall remnant only excepted) of mankind, notwithſtanding any grace or benefit received by the ſecond *Adam*, in, or through his death, is in an abſolute and utter incapacity, yea lyeth under an impoſſibility of eſcaping eternal miſery and torment, evident it is, that their condition was incomparably better in the firſt, than it is in, or by, the ſecond *Adam*. But how inconſiſtent ſuch a notion or ſuppoſition as this is with the truth, the courſe and current of the Scriptures, where ever they ſpeak of the tranſcendent Grace of God vouchſafed in *Jeſus Chriſt* unto the World, which is the great Subject or Argument of their delight, and in the exaltation whereof from place to place they triumph, do abundantly teſtifie. Doubtleſs, the Tabernacle of *Adam* being fallen, and raiſed up again by *Jeſus Chriſt*, is in ſo much the better condition by means of this raiſing up, above what it was before it fell, as the earthly Tabernacle of the bodies of the Saints will be, by being raiſed up from the dead, above what their ſtate and condition was before they died. This Argument alſo is further cleared, and vindicated againſt Objections, in the fore-

named

named Book, ſtiled *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 492, 493, &c.

14. If *Chriſt* died not for all men without exception, then no man whatſoever in his unregenerate eſtate, ſtands bound to believe in him, or to depend on him, at leaſt with any certainty of Faith or hope for ſalvation. This is evident, becauſe no man ſtands bound to that which is ſimply impoſſible, or to do that which in the nature of the thing it ſelf cannot be done. Now, if *Chriſt* died not for all men, but for an handful only, or a very few, comparatively (as our Brethren teach) no perſon being yet in an unconverted eſtate, hath any ground to depend upon him with any certainty, yea, or ſo much as with any probability, or comfortableneſs of faith, or hope, for ſalvation. Where 20 men have equally deſerved death by committing treaſon againſt their Prince, and a Declaration ſhall be made by this Prince, that only one of the 20 ſhall be pardoned, without the leaſt intimation given who this one ſhould be, no one of this number can have any certain, no, nor yet any probable ground of hope, that he is the perſon that ſhall be pardoned. But that all men without exception, as well unregenerate, as others, have ground ſufficient, and ſtand bound to believe, or depend, on *Chriſt* for ſalvation, hath been formerly proved. And if they ſtand bound to believe, certainly they ſtand bound to believe, not faintly, not haltingly,

not

not imperfectly, but with all ſtrength and fulneſs of aſſurance. The proceſs of this Argument likewiſe is further managed in the laſt mentioned Book, p. 496, 497, *&c.*

15. We judge our Brethrens Doctrine, which denieth *Chriſt*'s dying for all men, to be very palpably and broadly inconſiſtent, with that moſt gracious property in God, which the Scripture calls *Philanthropie*, [*i.e.* the love of men, or mankind] and commendeth unto the World. For he that hateth, and deſireth the miſery and ruine of, the generality of any greater body or community of men, cannot, either with reaſon, or truth, be ſaid to be a Friend, or lover of this Community, only becauſe he reſpects and loves two or three perſons relating hereunto; but only a lover of theſe perſons. The ſaid Book, pag. 408, 409, *&c.* diſcourſeth the ſtrength of this Argument alſo more at large.

16. If God intended a ſufficiency of means unto all men for their ſalvation, then (queſtionleſs) *Chriſt* died for all men; inaſmuch as there can be no ſufficiency of means for any mans ſalvation, without attonement made for him by *Chriſt* in his Death. But that God intended a ſufficiency of means for ſalvation unto all men; appears, 1. Becauſe otherwiſe God ſhould deal more diſtrictly, and with far greater ſeverity with men in the Goſpel, or in the Covenant of Grace, than he did in the Covenant of works

works made with them in *Adam*. For under this Covenant, they had a ſufficiency of means granted unto them for the performance of the terms and conditions in it. 2. God ſhould deal more rigorouſly and ſeverely with men, and this under the Goſpel and Covenant of Grace, than he doth with the Devils themſelves, in caſe he ſhould not vouchſafe unto them a ſufficiency of means for their ſalvation. Becauſe the Goſpel, and the Miniſtry of it, muſt infallibly, irreſiſtibly, and of neceſſity turn to the aggravation of the ſin, and conſequently to the increaſe of the condemnation of men, in caſe they be not ſufficiently provided of means to believe it. Whereas moſt certain it is, that God hath deſigned nothing, acteth nothing, not only which tends neceſſarily, or unavoidably, but which hath any tendency at all in it, to increaſe the puniſhment or condemnation of the Devils, above the demerit of their firſt ſin. The Authority of this Argument is further confirmed by ſundry pregnant conſiderations, in the oft-mentioned Book, pag. 498, 499, *&c.*

17. We conceive that all, or far the greateſt part of our Arguments and grounds, formerly inſiſted upon to juſtifie our diſſent from our Brethren in their Doctrine of Reprobation, are of force to juſtifie us alſo in our diſſent from them about the extent of the Death of *Chriſt*. For if God hath not by any decree of Reproba-

tion,

tion, excluded any perſon of mankind, conſidered as ſuch, from ſalvation, or from a poſſibility of being ſaved, neither hath he excluded them by any purpoſe or decree from part and fellowſhip in *Chriſt*'s Death.

18. We cannot imagine, or comprehend, what real inconvenience followeth upon, or attends that Doctrine, which affirmeth, that *Chriſt* died for all men: or what principle, notion, or ground, our Brethren can reaſonably conceive would be gained for any *Chriſtian* end or purpoſe whatſoever, in caſe it ſhould, or could be proved, that *Chriſt* died for no more, than the Elect only, above what is gained by the contrary Doctrine.

19. Such of us who have conſulted the Records and Writings of the moſt judicious, learned, and Orthodox Antiquity, here find that *Chriſt*'s dying for all men, was a Doctrine, generally, if not univerſally, held forth, and taught anciently in all *Chriſtian* Churches, and accordingly received. Yea, we find amongſt our late Proteſtant Writers themſelves, of beſt eſteem with us, very many paſſages and ſayings of perfect conſonancy and accord with that Doctrine, which avoucheth univerſality of Redemption purchaſed by *Chriſt*. The conſideration hereof is ſome further eſtabliſhment unto us, that the reſtraint of Gods gracious intentions in the Death of *Chriſt* only to the Elect (as our Brethren count Elect)

Elect) is built upon no foundation either of Prophets, or Apostles, or Christ.

20. Lastly, We judge, that we are able to shew, and prove, that these places, *I pray not for the World, I lay down my life for my sheep, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it*, with some others, which are commonly brought upon the Stage to act the part of enemies to the Doctrine of general attonement by *Christ*, hold good correspondence with it, and for matter of enmity, are altogether unrelated to it.

If the Reader desires any further account of our dissent in the great point now argued, he may please to receive satisfaction by perusing the 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 19. Chapters of the oft-named Book, *Redemption Redeemed.*

Our grounds of dissenting in the second particular mentioned under the second general head of Doctrine, are these. Reasons of Dissent in the second particular, under the second head.

1. We conceive that the Scriptures very expresly teach a possibility of such mens perishing, for whom *Christ* died. *Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died*, Rom. 14. 15. *And through thy knowledge shall the weak Brother perish, for whom Christ died*, 1 Cor. 8. 11. *who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*, 2 Pet. 2. 1. These Scriptures, with some others, the Reader may please to see argued and debated at large, and fully vindicated from all such interpretations, which

which endeavour to carry their ſenſe and meaning any other way. *Redemption Redeemed.* Chap. 8. throughout.

2. We cannot find any Text or paſſage throughout the whole *Scripture*, which ſo much as hinteth in the leaſt an univerſal impoſſibility of their periſhing, for whom Chriſt died.

3. We cannot conceive how the Apoſtle *Paul*, or other Miniſters of the Goſpel, ſhould be unto God the ſweet ſavour of *Chriſt* in thoſe who periſh, unleſs it be ſuppoſed that *Chriſt* died for them, yea, and that the Apoſtle preached, and that other Miniſters do preach this, in the name of God unto them.

4. Inaſmuch as the Scriptures no where teach, that any perſon, living to years of diſcretion, is put into an immediate capacity of ſalvation by the death of *Chriſt*, but only by, and upon, the intervening of Faith; and further, that they no where teach, that all thoſe for whom *Chriſt* died, ſhall, or will, at any time, believe, we conceive it indemonſtrable from the Scriptures, that none of thoſe, for whom *Chriſt* died, ſhall periſh.

5. We conceive that the glory of the death of *Chriſt*, yea, and of that Grace which is given by God unto the World therein, is the ſame, whether any perſon believe in him, and conſequently be ſaved by him, or no: and that no perſon, or perſons whatſoever, by any action, deport-

ment,

ment, or behaviour whatsoever, can either adde any thing to, or diminish, or take away any thing from it: And we judge further, that whosoever shall estimate, or measure the death of *Christ*, and the Grace, or gracious intentions of God therein unto the World, by the event, or success of both, or either, except in part only, are highly injurious both to the one, and the other.

6. Lastly, We verily believe, that no Text of Scripture, that can be produced, nor any Argument that can be levied, by our Brethren, for the probation of this Doctrine, That all those, for whom *Christ* died, shall certainly be saved, but, upon examination and due tryal, will be found defective in, and fall short of any such proof.

Reasons of Dissent in the third and last particular under the second head of Doctrine.

Our Reasons of dissenting from our Brethren in the third and last particular, relating to the second of the five heads of Doctrine propounded, are these;

1. We find no good footing in the Scriptures to stand by our Brethren in this Doctrine, That *Christ* by his Death purchased the actual collation of Faith, or Repentance, upon any man, against all possible interveniences, as of negligence, loosness, prophaneness, *&c.*

2. We find no ground in Scripture for any such apprehension as this; *viz.* That *Christ* by his Death hath procured any such grace, benefit, or priviledge for any of those, much less for all those, for whom he died,

died, as an infallible neceſſitation of them, to repent, or believe: or that all ſuch certainly, or infallibly will, or ſhall, either repent, or believe.

3. All the Reaſons and grounds aſſigned by us for our diſſent in the laſt particular, juſtifie us in our diſſent in this alſo. For if ſome of thoſe for whom *Chriſt* died, may poſſibly periſh notwithſtanding, it roundly follows, that he did not by his Death purchaſe any ſuch priviledge (if priviledge it were) for thoſe, for whom he died, as a certainty, or neceſſitation by the power of God, to believe.

4. The end of God's giving *Chriſt* to die for men, is not ſaid to be, that all to whom, or for whoſe ſake, he was given, might, or ſhould believe; but, that *whoſoever believeth in him*, [*i. e.* ſhould upon this giving of him, *believe*] *ſhould not periſh, but, &c. Joh.* 3. 16. which plainly ſheweth, that the intention of God in *Chriſt*'s Death, was not that any particular perſon, or perſons by name, ſhould poſitively, or abſolutely *believe*, but that *whoſoever* [*viz.* out of the generality of mankind, whether fewer, or more,] *ſhould believe, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.*

5. We conceive that ſuch a donation of Faith and Repentance by God, which is oppoſed by us in this particular, is utterly inconſiſtent as well with the nature, as the end, of the Grace of God vouchſafed unto the World by *Jeſus Chriſt*: and that in caſe

case any such donation were made by him, it would render the receivers, according to the Laws and terms of that righteousness, by which He hath declared that he will judge the World, uncapable of eternal life, yea (indeed) of any reward at all. Of this we shall render some further account, under the next head of Doctrine, concerning the grace of God.

6. Lastly (for this) all that we have yet met with from our Brethren in way of argument or ground to justifie their sense in opposition to ours, in the particular in hand, doth no way satisfie us; and we judge our selves able to give a fair, *Christian*, and satisfactory answer unto it.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the third Head of Doctrine propounded, The Grace, Or Free Grace, of God.

1. OUR Brethren teach, *That the Original or first spring of the Salvation of the World, was and is, the Grace, the free and meer Grace and good pleasure of God.* In this we agree like Brethren with them. Agreement in particulars about the free Grace of God.

2. They teach, *That the first and primary cause of the salvation of every particular person, which comes to be saved, is (in like manner) the free Grace, and good pleasure of God.* Neither in this are we divided from them.

3. They hold, *That the gift of* Jesus Christ *for a Mediator and Saviour unto the World, issued wholly and solely from the same Fountain of free Grace.* Herein also we make one in judgement with them.

4. They say, *That the purpose, grant, and promise of justification by, or upon, believing in Christ, made by God unto men, are the genuine fruits of the free Grace of God.* Neither do we ascribe them to any other cause, either in whole, or in part.

5. They teach further, *That it is from the free and undeserved Grace of God that any person of mankind is put into a capacity of believing, or hath power and means vouchsafed unto him, sufficient to enable him to believe.* Neither have we any propension in our judgements to dissent from them in this.

6. Their Doctrine is, *That that which they call (properly enough) preventing Grace, is given irresistibly by God, and cannot be withstood, or rejected, in or about the receiving of it, by men.* We imbrace our Brethrens sense and judgement in this also.

7. They further teach concerning this preventing Grace, (which other while, as we suppose, they call, common Grace) *that as it is irresistibly, so likewise universally, given by God unto men.* Nor doth this Doctrine separate us in thought from our Brethren.

8. They teach also, *That this talent of initial or exciting Grace* (as sometimes they term

term it) *being once granted, is never taken away by God from any man, unless he first voluntarily, and of his own free accord, forsaketh it* a. This Doctrine of our Brethren we approve likewise, as savoury and sound.

a *vi. Acta Synod. Dordr. part. 2. p. 129.*

9. They yet teach, *That there are certain inward workings, or effects, wrought by the Word and Spirit of God, preceding conversion and regeneration in the hearts of persons not yet justified, which God ceaseth not to promote and carry on towards conversion, untill he be forsaken in his way by the voluntary negligence of men, or untill this initial Grace of his be repulsed* b. Here also we build with them with both our hands.

b *Ibidem.*

10. They further affirm, *That these preparatory or previous workings of the Spirit of God in men, in order to their conversion, may be wholly choaked, stifled, and extinguished by the viciousness or corruption of the will* c. Their sense and ours accord in this also.

c *Ibidem.*

11. They hold, *That God doth very seriously and in good earnest, invite and call all those to Faith and Conversion, in whom by his word and spirit he worketh a knowledge of the divine will, a sense of sin, a dread of punishment, some hope of pardon, &c. All which notwithstanding they acknowledge may vanish and come to nothing* a. We praise our Brethrens Doctrine in this also.

a *Acta Synod. Dordr. In Sententi. Britannorum Theologorum circa 3. & 4. articulos, &c.*

12. They hold likewise, *That actual Conversion is not wrought by any act or power*

of God, until the will it self, being acted or moved by God, turneth it self unto God, and believeth b. We accept of our Brethrens Doctrine in this point also.

Ibidem.

13. They teach, *That men are justified by a Covenant of free Grace, and not by a Covenant of Works.* We both expect and teach justification upon the same terms with them.

14. They teach, *That not only the power of converting and believing, but the acts themselves are the effects and fruits of, and ought really to be ascribed to, the free Grace of God.* Our Brethrens thoughts are our thoughts in this likewise.

Particulars of dissent about the third head of Doctrine.

About this Head of Doctrine therefore we dissent from them, only, or mainly, in these particulars.

1. Our Brethren limit and restrain the free Grace of God in his intendments of salvation, to a determinate number of men, (and this comparatively, very inconsiderable) whom they term, the Elect: We on the other hand believe the Grace of God to be so free, rich, and abounding towards mankind, that he seriously intends the salvation of all men.

2. Our Brethren likewise straiten and confine the Grace of God in the vouchsafement of means sufficient for salvation, to the said determinate parcel, or small number of men; we contrarily judge it to be diffusive, in this expression or fruit of it, thro ghout all mankind.

3. They

3. They resolve the non-conversion, and non-believing of all those who are not effectually converted, and brought to believe, into a defectiveness of, or in, the Grace of God towards them. We on the contrary teach the sole cause of mens miscarrying in not partaking the great blessings of conversion, and believing, to reside in men themselves only, or in their own voluntary neglect, and wickedness.

4. They affirm, That when God works effectually upon men, by his spirit in order to their conversion, or with an intent to convert them, men are hereby infallibly and irresistibly necessitated to convert, and cannot possibly so withstand this work of God, about, or in order to their conversion, but that first or last they will, shall, and must, be actually and really converted. Whereas our sense, (about this particular) is, that no man is so constrained, or necessitated, by any act of God, or of his Grace, upon his will, to convert, or believe, but that he may possibly, through his voluntary negligence and obduratenes of heart, remain finally unconverted, and unbelieving.

In these four particulars we cannot subscribe to our Brethrens Doctrine, for the Reasons ensuing. Concerning the first.

Reasons of Dissent about the first particular under the third Head of Doctrine.

1. We conceive that the Scriptures from place to place, do very pregnantly, and without parable, represent and assert the

love and free Grace of God in his intentions of ſalvation unto all men, conſidered as ſuch, without exception, *Ezek.* 18. 23, 32. *Ezek.* 33. 11. *Joh.* 1. 7. *Act.* 3. 26. *Prov.* 1. 20, 21, 22, *&c.* 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. 6. *Heb.* 2. 9. 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. 1 *Joh.* 2. 2, *&c.*

2. Conſidering, 1. That there was a time when all men were righteous, (as, *viz.* in *Adam*, before his fall,) and, 2. That God loveth the righteous, and conſequently intends ſalvation unto them; and, 3. That Gods intentions are himſelf, and therefore unchangeable; we are not capable of underſtanding, how it is poſſible but that He ſhould intend the ſalvation of all men. Nor doth the change of men, from righteouſneſs unto ſin, make, or ſuppoſe, any change or alteration at all in the intentions of God. For even whilſt he did intend the ſalvation of righteous men, and conſequently their ſalvation, being yet righteous; he did intend alſo the condemnation of wicked men, and conſequently their condemnation, in caſe of Apoſtaſie, and declining unto ſin.

Gods purpoſe was to condemn all, as well one as another, upon condition of their diſobedience. Dr. *Twiſſe* againſt Mr. *Cotton*, Predeſtination p. 95.

3. That high reverence we bear to the truth and faithfulneſs of God in his ſayings, ſuffereth us not to judge or think, but that as he offereth ſalvation unto all men, promiſing, without exception, that whoſoever ſhall believe in his Son, ſhall be ſaved, ſo he intendeth their ſalvation accordingly. So that in caſe any perſon be not ſaved, this great miſery doth not befall him

through

through any defect in the intentions of God about his ſalvation, or becauſe his ſalvation was not as well intended by God, as theirs, who come to be ſaved, but only becauſe he voluntarily neglecteth ſalvation, being offered unto him, which he that believeth, and ſo comes to be ſaved, doth not. How, and in what ſenſe, the intentions of God, may, according to the Scriptures, and without the leaſt reflexion of weakneſs, or other diſparagement, upon God, be ſaid to miſcarry, or to be made fruſtrate, hath been declared at large by one of us *a*,

a See Redemp. Redeemed, p. 22, 35, 215, 434.

4. We cannot but judge it injurious and diſhonourable in the higheſt, to the infinite and immenſe Grace of God, to conceive, that it ſhould content, and contain it ſelf within the ſtrait bounds, and narrow compaſs of minding or intending the ſalvation only of an handful, or ſmall number of men, when as he had an opportunity before him to provide for the ſalvation of all; yea, and by the ſelf-ſame proviſion, which (as our Brethren themſelves acknowledge) he made for ſome few, might, if he had pleaſed, have equally provided for all (which they alſo will not deny.) Nor are we able to caſt it, or make it out in our thoughts, how it can poſſibly ſtand with the unſearchable riches of that Grace, which is in God, rather to ſuffer the blood of *Chriſt*, in reſpect of many millions of millions of poor Creatures, who ſtood in every whit as much need of it, as thoſe whom our Brethren

grant to be relieved by it, to vaniſh into the Air, or be as water ſpilt upon the ground, than to provide for the ſupport and relief of thoſe poor Creatures by it. And as the Apoſtle *John* ſpeaking of ſuch a man, who *having this Worlds good, and and ſeeing his Brother have need, and yet ſhutteth up his Bowels of compaſſion from him*, demandeth, *how dwelleth the love of God in him?* So (doubtleſs) there would be a far greater occaſion to demand concerning God, How dwelleth the love of man in him, or how is he ſo unmeaſurably gracious, if having means and opportunity in his hand to relieve the whole World of mankind in their great miſery and utmoſt extremity, yea, and this without the leaſt inconvenience unto himſelf in any kind imaginable, yet ſhall ſuffer the far greateſt part of them to periſh everlaſtingly, without ſhewing them the leaſt grace, favour, or compaſſion, or ſo much as intending the leaſt degree of relief unto them thereby?

5. Our Brethren themſelves grant, that the Miniſters of the Goſpel may truly and ſeriouſly call every perſon of mankind unto remiſſion of ſins and ſalvation; and that whatſoever, according to the Goſpel, is offered or promiſed by the Miniſters thereof unto men, is after the ſame manner offered and promiſed unto them by the Author of the Goſpel himſelf (with much more to like purpoſe *a.*) Now if God truly, ſeriouſly, and without all ſimulation, offers

a Act. Syn. Nation. Dordr. part. 2. p. 78, 79, & p. 128.

and

and promiseth remission of sins and salvation unto all men without exception, he must needs be conceived truly and seriously to intend the salvation of all men.

6. All the Reasons assigned by us (which are many) for our dissent from our Brethren in the second and sixth particulars under the first Head of Doctrine, justifie us in this also. For if God hath not decreed from eternity the Reprobation of any person of mankind, as such, who may not very possibly be saved, any such Decree notwithstanding; yea, and the primary end or antecedent intention of God in his Decree of Reprobation, be, not the condemnation, but the salvation of men, it roundly followeth, that then his gracious intentions of salvation extend themselves unto all men.

7. Again, all the Arguments and grounds laid down by us to justifie our dissent in the first particular under the second Head of Doctrine, serve us upon the like account in this also. For if it be true that *Christ*, according to the Counsel and Intention of God, died for all men without exception, it must needs be true also, that the Grace of God in his intentions of salvation, stretcheth it self unto all men.

8. Lastly, we have neither seen, nor heard of, any thing offered by our Brethren, either from the Scriptures, or otherwise, that causeth the least hesitancy or doubtfulness in our judgements, about what

what we assert and hold in this particular.

Reasons of dissent in the second particular, under the third head of Doctrine.

The grounds of our dissent in the second particular under this third Head of Doctrine, are,

1. We judge the Scriptures to be very pregnant and clear in holding forth this, That God vouchsafeth a sufficiency of means unto all men whereby to be saved. Otherwise we cannot conceive, how it can (with truth) be said of him that he *will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. Or, that *he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. Or, *that he desireth not the death of him that dieth*, *For doubtless he is not willing that all men should be saved, who, 1. Knowing that they cannot be saved without sufficient means granted unto them by himself in order thereunto, and, 2. That himself is able without the least inconvenience to grant them these means, shall yet refuse to grant such means unto them. Nor can he be said *not to desire the death of him that dieth*, who knowing that he must of necessity *die*, unless himself vouchsafeth sufficient means to prevent his dying, being every waies able, and without prejudice to himself in the least, to afford them, shall nevertheless deny the vouchsafement of them. That these Texts of Scripture cannot be evaded by any interpretation whatsoever, hath been largely shewed and proved from

* Ezek. 18. 32.

from their respective Contexts elsewhere *a*.

2. The Scripture clearly affirmeth, the counsel or purpose of God about those who perish, to be this, that they shall be left without excuse, *Rom.* 1. 20. *Rom.* 3. 19. Now we conceive, that a plea of impotency to perform that, which a person is commanded to do, being made according to truth, is the fairest and first-born of all excuses; yea (indeed) somewhat more than an excuse, being a very equitable account of such a non-performance. Yea, if they who perish, should be in a capacity of pleading only this, that the abilities of repenting or believing, which were given unto them in *Adam* b, were lost by him without their knowledge or consent, would be a very considerable, and competent excuse for their not believing.

3. The Scriptures report, that the Lord *Christ* marvelled both at the unbelief of some, who did not believe, *Mar.* 6. 6. as also at the Faith of others who did believe, *Matth.* 8. 10. From the former we cannot but infer, that certainly *Christ* knew that they at whose unbelief he marvelled, had sufficient power to believe: inasmuch as no man, consistent in his wits, marvelleth at a man, because, being in danger of his life, he doth not flye in the Air like a Bird, to make an escape, or doth not vanish out of sight like a spirit, or Angel. The non-performance of known impossibilities, is no

a Redempt. Redeemed, p. 103, 104, 105, &c. 284 417, 418.

b We do not believe, that men ever received any ability in *Adam*, either to Repent or believe, (See *Redempt. Redeemed*, p. 503, 504, &c.) but only make this supposition according to the sense of our adversaries.

no ſober mans wonder. From the latter we ſhall make inference in due time.

4. The Scripture likewiſe frequently reſolveth the unbelief and impenitency of men into the ſtubbornneſs of their wills, but never (to our beſt remembrance) into a deficiency or want of means or power for repenting, or believing, eſpecially not till after long and voluntary obduration. *But ye Will not come unto me, that ye might have life*, Joh. 5. 40. So to *Jeruſalem how oft would I have gathered thy Children— but ye* Would *not*, Matth. 23. 27. *Except ye ſee ſigns and wonders, ye* Will *not believe*, Joh. 4. 48. (with many the like.) From whence we cannot but conclude, that the cauſe of every mans impenitency and unbelief reſideth in his will, and not in want of means ſufficient for his enablement to repent and believe, or to make him willing to do both.

5. The Scripture teſtifieth that God vouchſafed unto ſome perſons, who yet repented not, means for repentance every whit as gracious and effectual, as his wiſdom permitted him to do. *What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it ſhould bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes*, Iſa. 5. 4. A ſpirit of the ſame ſenſe and import ruleth in that Text alſo (lately cited) *Matt.* 23. 37. From whence we argue, that no mans impenitency or unbelief any wales proveth a want of means ſufficiently, enabling him to repent and believe;

See this paſſage of Scripture largely opened and debated, *Redemptum Redeemed*, p. 428, 429, 473.

lieve; unleſs we ſhall ſay, that God is not able to give any ſuch ſufficiency unto every man, which (we preſume) is no mans thought. The Synod of *Dort* it ſelf alloweth us Orthodox in this, teaching the ſame Doctrine in theſe words. *Thoſe helps of Grace, which are adminiſtred unto men* [by God] *are to be eſtimated by the nature of the benefit offered by them, and by the manifeſt word of God, not by the abuſe of them, or the event* a. Nor can we judge, but that if God vouchſafeth a ſufficiency of means of Repentance, unto ſome, who notwithſtanding repent not, he doth the ſame unto all others, being not able to ſatisfie our ſelves why God ſhould make a difference in this kind; although (by the way) we do not hold that God vouchſafeth, either an identity of means, or equality, unto all.

a *Ex naturâ beneficii oblati, & verbo Dei apertiſſimo judicandum eſt de illis gratiæ auxiliis, quæ hominibus ſuppeditantur, non autem ex abuſu, aut eventu.* Act. Syn. Nation. Dordr. part. 2. p. 128.

6. The Scripture frequently upbraideth thoſe who believe not, with the example of others who do believe. *For* John *came unto you in the way of righteouſneſs, and* Ye Believed *him* Not: *but the Publicans and Harlots* Believed him. *And ye when ye had ſeen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him* b. *The men of* Niniveh *ſhall riſe up in judgement with this Generation, and ſhall* Condemn *it, becauſe they repented at the preaching of* Jonas, *and behold, a greater than* Jonas *is here* c. *By Faith* Noah *being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark to the ſaving of his houſe, by which he* Condemned *the World* d. Now we judg it a thing clear and evi-

b Mat. 21. 32.

c Mat. 12. 41.

d Heb. 11. 7.

dent,

vident, that the Repentance of those who repent (and so the Faith of those who believe) can be no matter of shame, disparagement, or condemnation, unto those who repent not, (and so, who believe not) unless it be supposed, that they who repent not (and so who believe not) have a like sufficiency of means enabling them to repent, and believe, with the other. The casting great matters into the Treasury by great men, was no disparagement or shame to the *poor Widow*, that cast in *two mites* only, because these two mites were her whole substance, she was not able to cast in more: in which respect our Saviour himself gives her this testimony, that *she had cast in more then they all*. Their casting in great matters, would have been matter of just disparagement unto her, in case she had been as wealthy as they, and should have cast in her *two mites* only. Nor is the flying of a Fowl in the Air, any disparagement to a man, in that he doth not the like: Nor is the speaking of *Greek* and *Hebrew*, by him, who hath been seven years at School to learn these Tongues, and hath had the help of men expert and skilful in them to direct him, any matter of disparagement to an Infant of daies, who is not as yet capable of such education, though he speaketh them not. And generally where there is not an equality of strength, means, and abilities for the performance of an action that is commendable, the performance of it by him, or them, who have the advantage of

strength

ſtrength and means in this kind, doth no waies reflect diſparagement upon the others, though they perform it not. If thoſe who do believe, have the Omnipoteney of Heaven to aſſiſt them in believing, nay, to neceſſitate them to believe, certainly their believing is no matter of diſrepute or diſgrace unto thoſe who believe not, eſpecially if it be ſuppoſed that they have no Power at all to believe.

7. The Scripture requireth no other belief to enable any perſon to *come unto God* [meaning, with acceptation, and ſo as to pleaſe him, as the Context round about plainly ſheweth] but only to believe, 1. *That God is*, 2. *That he is a rewarder of thoſe who diligently ſeek him.* Now that men generally are in a ſufficient capacity, partly by the light of nature, that ſenſe, and thoſe impreſſions of a Deity, which, according to the judgement of *Calvin*, and all Learned Divines, are found ſtamped by God himſelf upon the hearts and conſciences of all men, partly by the works of Creation, and partly by the gracious tenor of thoſe providential adminiſtrations, wherein God and his goodneſs appear daily in the World; that men (we ſay) by all theſe, are in a capacity, to believe both, 1. *That God is*; 2. *That he is a rewarder of thoſe who diligently ſeek him*, is evident, partly from the Scriptures themſelves, *Rom.* 1. 19, 20, 21. *Act.* 17. 27, 28, *&c.* partly alſo from the writings of many Heathens (who never had the opportunity

portunity to consult with the Scriptures, little or much) in which they declare themselves to believe every whit as much, (yea, and much more) concerning God, as is contained in the said two Propositions. This Argument, the Reader, if he please, may find further urged and vindicated elsewhere *a*.

a Redempt. Redeemed, p. 506, 507, &c.

8. The Scripture oft mentioneth, that God, most graciously, most affectionately, most earnestly invites such persons to repent and to believe, and this in order to their salvation, who yet never come to repent or believe, but in conclusion perish. Places of this import are sufficiently known, and have been pointed at formerly *b*. And this Doctrine is Canonical by the suffrage of the Synod of *Dort* it self *c*. Now if it shall be supposed, that the men thus graciously, thus affectionately, thus earnestly invited, call'd, importuned by God to repent, and to believe, have no sufficiency of power, neither mediate, nor immediate, to do either, God in such gracious invitations, and pathetical applications of himself unto them, must be conceived only to insult over them in their extremity of misery, and not to intend any thing truly gracious, or of a saving import towards them. Whether such a conceit as this be any waies worthy the ever-gracious and blessed God, or so much as in probability comporting with those passionate wishes and desires of the peace and safety of those who perish, frequently

b Page 6.

c Part. 2. pag. 128, 129.

frequently aſcribed unto God in the Scriptures, we leave to the Chriſtian Reader to give ſentence.

9. The Scripture frequently aſcribeth the condemnation and periſhing of men to their non believing; (and conſequently ſuppoſeth it to be a ſin.) *But he that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed,* &c. Joh. 3. 18. *He that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but,* &c. verſ. 36. *Except ye believe that I am he, ye ſhall periſh,* &c. Joh. 8 24. Now if men have not a ſufficiency of power given unto them by God to believe, but the Act of believing (according to our Brethrens Doctrine) neceſſarily requires the unbaring, or ſome extraordinary ſtretching forth of the omnipotent Arm of God to effect it, in their being condemned for non-belief, they ſhould be condemned for not acting or doing that, which is proper only for God himſelf to do, and conſequently, for not being God, or omnipotent, as he is.

10. The Scripture placeth that unbelief of men, which is condemning, in this, that it maketh God a lyar. *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witneſs in himſelf: he that believeth not God, hath made him a lyar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son* a, &c. So then if men generally have means and power ſufficient from God, to juſtifie him in his ſayings, as being a God of truth, or to refrain and forbear the horrid blaſphemy of making him a

a 1 Joh. 5. 10.

lyar, or charging him with untruth, they have a ſufficiency of means to believe, and this to ſalvation. But that the light of the knowledge of God, which ſhines from *Chriſt* in the hearts of all men (without exception) is ſufficient to preſerve and keep them from daſhing their foot at this ſtone of condemnation, the making God a lyar, we ſuppoſe no man hath any ſufficient cauſe to doubt, or queſtion: or however, it is ſufficiently proved by the Scriptures mentioned in our ſeventh Argument of this levy.

11. The Scriptures plainly teach, that the World or Generation of mankind, is put into a better ſtate and condition in or by the ſecond *Adam*, than that, wherein it was inveſted in the firſt. This we have proved formerly: and beſides, it is the ſenſe (we preſume) of all conſidering men. But if it be true, that the far greateſt part of men have ſuch terms put upon them by God, for the obtaining of life and peace under the ſecond *Adam* or the Goſpel which are beyond their ſtrength, and which they have no ſufficient power to perform, the caſe will be far otherwiſe; and the condition of mankind will be found to have been a thouſand times better, more hopeful, and deſirable, in the firſt *Adam*, where (in the judgement of all men) they were in a ſufficient capacity of performing the conditions required of them by God for obtaining life and happineſs, than it is in the

ſecond.

second. This Argument we made use of in a former point.

12. The Scriptures plainly affirm that God beareth more love and good will unto men, though fallen, than unto the lapsed Angels, or Devils, *Heb.* 2. 14, 15, 16. *Joh.* 3. 16. *Jud.* v. 6. *&c.* But certain it is, that the Devils will be found Gods favourites in comparison of men, (I mean of the far greater part of men,) unless it be granted, that all men have a sufficiency of means given unto them by God, enabling them to repent and believe. The reason of this consequence hath been formerly given in the sixteenth ground of our dissent in the first particular under the second general head of Doctrine: and the Reader, if he please, may find the whole Argument somewhat further opened and prosecuted elsewhere *d*.

d Redempt. Redeemed, p. 499.

13. The Scriptures (times without number) affirm, that God is very gracious, merciful, bountiful, *&c.* and in one place very plainly, that *he accepteth a man according to that which he hath, and not according to that which he hath not* a, *&c.* But if he should require Faith and Repentance of men (as he doth of all men) and not give them wherewith, or whereby to raise and exhibit them, he should be rather like to those cruel *Egyptian* Task-masters set over the Children of *Israel*, who denied them straw, and yet exacted of them their tale of brick, and beat them if they made it not *a*, or like the hard

a 2 Cor. 8. 12.

a Exod. 5. 11, 13, 14.

man in the parable, charged by his Servant to *gather, where he did not strew, and to reap, where he did not sow* b, than unto a tender, gracious, and bountiful God. That men never received power in *Adam*, to repent or believe; and that, in case it could be proved they did here receive them, yet that it stands not, either with the equity or graciousness of Gods proceedings, nor with the tenor of several Declarations made by him in the gospel, to judg men upon that account, both these have been demonstratively proved by one of us in another discourse c.

b Mat. 25. 24.

c Redempt. Redeemed, p. 503, 504, 505, &c.

14. The Scripture from place to place declareth that God will *judge the World in righteousness and with equity* d; that he *will judge every man, and render unto every man according to his works* e, that he is *no respecter of persons* f, (with much more of like import.) Now we cannot understand how God can be said to judg the World in righteousness, and with equity, or to reward every man according to his works, and this without respect of persons, in case it be supposed (as our Brethren suppose) that he rewards some men with eternal blessedness and glory, who do nothing but what they are irresistibly necessitated and over-ruled by a strong hand of power to do; and adjudgeth others unto the vengeance of eternal fire for not doing that, which is impossible for them to do, yea, for not doing that, which is possible only for God himself to do; especially considering

d Psal. 98. 9. Acts 17. 31.

e Rom. 2. 6. Revel. 20. 12.

f Rom. 2. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 17, &c.

that

that these adjudged to Hell-fire, may very possibly have done more, which in a way of equity is rewardable, the scantness of their strength and means considered, than they who are rewarded with Heaven, considering not only the super-abundant strength and means, wherewith they were supplied by God, above the others, for the doing of whatsoever they did, but also that they were absolutely necessitated to do that, for, or according unto which, they are so highly rewarded. Therefore certainly all men have sufficient means from God for their salvation.

15. The Scripture affirms that the Apostles were (and consequently, that all faithful Ministers of the Gospel, are) in their Ministry of the Gospel, *the sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them that perish*, as well as *in them that are saved* a. Now we cannot conceive, how, or in what respect, one or more, either *Christ* himself should be a *sweet savour unto God* in those that perish, or his Apostles and Ministers the *sweet savour* of him, [*i.e.* persons who by their effectual tender of him unto men, as well unto those who perish, as unto those who are saved, proclaim the unsearchable riches of his Grace in him unto the World, which is a thing very savoury and acceptable unto God] unless it be supposed, that even those who *perish*, are in a capacity of receiving him, and believing in him to salvation, as well as those, who come

a 2 Cor. 2. 15.

to be saved. But this granted, or supposed, it is very obvious to our apprehensions, how the Apostles might be, and faithful Ministers of the Gospel now may be, *the sweet savour of Christ unto God*, even in those *who perish*, as well as in those *who are saved*; as, *viz.* by declaring and making it to appear, that God was not straitened in bowels, or graciousness of intendments towards them, more than unto others; and consequently, that their destruction is solely and intirely from themselves, and not from him, nor from any deficiency, or denial of his Grace unto them.

16. The Scripture holdeth forth this rule of equity, as that by which God will proceed in his awards and dealings with men: *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required* b. This clearly includes in it two other Rules of like equity. 1. That where, or to whomsoever, little is given, little of him will be required. 2. That to whomsoever nothing is given, of him nothing will be required, (*viz.* to their justification, and salvation.) From hence it clearly follows (in our apprehensions) that of whomsoever God requireth Faith and Repentance (as he doth of all men) to them he hath given a sufficient proportion of abilities, strength, and means, whereby to raise, and afford them. And that in case any man be denied a sufficiency of power to believe, that God requires not Faith of him.

b Luke 12. 48.

17. The

17. The Scripture representeth the condition of all and every person of mankind, as well of those who shall perish, as of those that shall be saved, in the parable of the *Talents* a, in which we hear of no man questioned, or called to account, but only those, that had received *Talents*, one, or more. They who had received more, brought in accounts of a proportionable improvement, and were accordingly commended, and rewarded. He that received only one, is sorely reproved by his Lord, and commanded to be *cast into utter darkness, where there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth*, as having been an *unprofitable Servant*, and *hid his Talent in the Earth*. These *Talents* must needs be supposed to have all been of one and the same kind, and therefore equally capable of improvement to the approbation and reward of those, who received them. Otherwise, if his *Talent*, who was condemned by his Lord for hiding it, should have been so conditioned, that it was not possible for him to have improved it, as well as his fellow-Servants improved theirs, the sentence of condemnation given against him by his Lord, would have been very unreasonable, hard, and unjust, as having no other ground for it, but only this; *viz.* That a poor wretch did not do more, yea, a thousand times more, than was possible for him to do.

a Mat. 25 14, 15, &c. Luke 19. 12, &c.

18. The Scripture defineth or describeth the Gospel (as we have formerly observed)

by this Character, that it is a *Doctrine*, or a *Truth*, *according to Godliness* b, [*i.e.* a Systeme or body of Truth, or Doctrine, the constitution, nature, and tendency whereof in every vein and part of it, is to advance *Godliness* in the World.] So that every Doctrine, or opinion, whose direct and proper tendency is to promote *godliness* amongst men, must of necessity correspond, and be of affinity with the Gospel, and consequently, must needs be a truth; as on the contrary, what Doctrine soever is directly, either destructive, or obstructive, unto godliness, must of necessity be an error. Now as far as we are able to judge, that Doctrine which avoucheth every person of mankind to be, through the Grace of God, invested with power and abilities to repent, and to believe, is of an express, and potent tendency for the advancement of godliness, and worthy engagements amongst men; as on the contrary, that Doctrine, which labours to put men into a conceit, or belief, that they are bound hand and foot, and cannot move so much as one step towards repentance, yea, may labour all daies of their lives to repent, and believe, and yet die impenitently, and perish everlastingly, when they have done, we cannot but judge to be a Doctrine of the keenest enmity, and fiercest antipathy against *Godliness*, that lightly can be imagined; because it quencheth that spirit in men, which principally provoketh unto action, and without which all

b 1 Tim. 6. 3. Tit. 1. 1.

Mother motives whatſoever are dull and dead, we mean, the ſpirit of hope by endeavours to obtain.

19. The Scripture ever and anon ſpeaketh very glorious and excellent things of the Grace of God towards men; and particularly affirmeth, that *where ſin abounded, Grace did abound much more* a. Now we cannot but judge it to be highly contumelious and injurious to the Grace of God, that any man ſhould teach, or ſay, that he purpoſed and reſolved from eternity, to deſtroy, and this with everlaſting perdition, millions of millions, yea (in a manner, only a ſmall remnant comparatively excepted) the whole Generation of his beſt beloved Creatures, men, and this for, or in caſe of a non-performance of ſuch Articles, terms, and conditions impoſed on them, which himſelf certainly knew were impoſſible for them, even by the beſt and utmoſt improvement or deportment of themſelves, to perform.

a Rom. 5. 20.

20. God certainly knoweth that men cannot repent, or believe, but only by Grace and means received from himſelf in order to the performance of theſe actions. And yet we know that he threatneth damnation unto all thoſe, who ſhall not repent, and believe. Now we cannot but judge it a ſtrain of extream weakneſs, and altogether unworthy, and unbecoming the infinite wiſdom of God, to threaten men with the moſt horrid puniſhment that can be imagined,

imagined, for the non-performance of such things, which he knows that himself only is able to perform, and that the persons threatned by him, neither are, nor can be, in any capacity to perform them, but only by strength and means from himself, which notwithstanding he refuseth to grant unto them.

21. All our Arguments propounded for our justification in dissenting from our Brethren in the former particular, strengthen our hand here also. For if God really intends the salvation of all men, we cannot conceive how he should deny unto them a sufficiency of means whereby to be saved.

22. All the reasons and grounds likewise formerly laid down by us to render our dissent in the second particular under the first head of Doctrine, warrantable, stand by us in our present dissent also. For if God from eternity decreed not the Reprobation of any person of mankind, so, or upon any such terms, but that notwithstanding his Decree, this person very possibly may (or at least sometimes, might) be saved; nay, if that very Decree of Reprobation was made and published by God in order to the salvation of those, who through their own wilful neglect come in time to be reprobated by it (which we make good in our sixth particular of dissent under that head) it clearly follows, that God out of the unsearchable riches of his Grace vouch-

vouchsafeth unto every man means competent for his salvation.

23. It much strengtheneth us in the point in hand, that we find all Orthodox and Learned Antiquity (as far as any of us have had opportunity to search into their Records) praising our Doctrine concerning the free Grace of God, as so far rejoycing over, and magnifying it self in the World, as to put all flesh into a capacity of salvation; according to that of *Austin*: *We abominate the blasphemie of those, who teach that any thing is commanded of God, which is unpossible for man to do; and that the Commandments of God cannot be performed by every particular man, but only by all men together* a. And this likewise of *Basil* the Great. *It is impious to affirm, that the Precepts of the Holy Ghost are impossible* b. So that the great Assertors of Christian Religion of old, found *blasphemy* and *impiety* in that Doctrine, which many pretending to Orthodoxism in these daies, cry up as the great Assertress of the free grace of God. We have in a readiness very many more testimonies from the best Antiquity of like import.

24. Neither are we a little confirm'd in the justness of our present dissent, by those frequent passages and sayings, very plain, pregnant, and express, which occur to us in the writings, and discourses of our Brethren of opposite judgement, of perfect accord with that Doctrine, which we here

a *Execramur blasphemiam eorum, qui dicunt impossibile aliquid homini a Deo esse præceptum, & mandata* Dei *non a singulis, sed ab omnibus in communi posse servari.* Aug.

b Ἀσεβὲς τὸ λέγειν ἀδύνατα εἶναι τὰ τῷ πνεύματι παραγγέλματα. *Basil. Homil.* 3.

here maintain. We are able to produce many ſayings from them of this import, but that now we are debtors, by reſolution and promiſe, unto brevity. A teſtimony from an adverſary (much more many from many) is both by common interpretation, and upon a rational account alſo, of good Authority and weight.

25. Laſtly, We never yet met with any thing, either from our friends, the Scriptures, or from our adverſaries, our Brethren, any waies conſiderable to counterpoiſe our judgements againſt the weight of thoſe, both Scriptures and Reaſons, which we have now briefly mentioned, as the grounds of our diſſent from our Brethren in the particular in hand. Yea, we are ſo full of aſſurance, that we have truth on our ſide in this, that we cannot but judge the contrary Doctrine to be very palpably and manifeſtly derogatory, and detracting, from the praiſe of the free Grace of God; yea, to be the bane and quench-coal of godly endeavours in men, and to have directly occaſioned the loſs and ruine of many thouſand precious ſouls, who building upon the imaginary truth of it, never thought of *awaking out of* their *ſleep*, or *ſtanding up from the dead*; and conſequently never were in that regular poſture the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, to have the *light* of life, *given* by *Chriſt* unto them, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ſtand up* [*or, ariſe*] *from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.* Eph. 5. 14.

In

In the third particular mentioned under the third head of Doctrine, we cannot accord with our Brethren for these Reasons. Reasons of dissent in the third particular.

1. We find the Scriptures from first to last, resolving the punishment, condemnation, and destruction of men, into themselves, and for the most part into their own wills (as was formerly observed) never into any defect of the Grace of God towards them. We shall not need to cite passages upon this account: they are so numerous, obvious, and neer at hand.

2. The Scriptures affirm that God *doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of men* a; If he doth not afflict, (with external afflictions) or grieve men *willingly*, [*i. e.* out of any propension natural, or essential, unto him] much less can we think that he doth willingly inflict the vengeance of eternal fire upon the Children of men: and consequently, neither can we judge that he is defective or wanting in such subministrations of Grace, and means of salvation unto them, by which they may very possibly escape or prevent this most dreadful infliction by his hand. And if so, then cannot the reason of any mans perishing be ascribed unto God, or to any denyal, or withholding of Grace by him, but only to the neglect or abuse of that Grace, which is by him vouchsafed unto them. a Lam. 3. 33.

3. Those most affectionate expressions from God

God (formerly mentioned) of his zealous desires of the salvation, even of those who perish, plainly enough declare, that he is no waies accessary to their perishing: and consequently, that they perish not for want of Grace from him, whereby to be saved, but for their voluntary non-comporting with that Grace, which is vouchsafed to them, and which complyed with, and improved, was sufficient to have saved them.

4. When God with-holds such grace, or such an assistance of his Spirit, from men, without which they cannot actually repent, or believe, this withholding is not to be charged upon *God*, as if he were at all backward, or unwilling to afford it unto them; but to be imputed to their own voluntary neglect, or abuse, of the grace already received; in which case God judgeth it not consistent with his wisdom and holiness (and consequently impossible for him) to advance any further proportion, or degree of grace unto them, but rather gradually to withdraw the grace already given, according to that most equitable Principle (oft mentioned and asserted by our Saviour in the Gospel,) *To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundantly: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath.*

5. All those 25 Arguments lately produced and insisted upon by us, to acquit our selves from error in dividing from our Bre-

Brethren in the next preceding point, give testimony to our faithfulness in dissenting from them in this also. For if God vouchsafe sufficient means of salvation unto all men, he is (certainly) free from their condemnation, and the blood of their souls resteth upon their own heads.

6. Neither hath any thing as yet been presented to our thoughts, either by our Brethren, or otherwise, of any competent strength, to turn our judgements unto them in this particular.

Reasons of dissent in the fourth (and last) particular, under the third general head of Doctrine.

We cannot accord with our Brethren in the fourth and last particular, under the present head of Doctrine; because of these considerations lying in our way.

1. The Scripture plainly informeth us, that God went as far as he could to make his Vineyard (*the people of Israel, and men of Judah*) fruitful; *i. e.* to draw them to repent and believe, and so to bring forth fruits worthy repentance: yea, he went so far in this kind, that he referred it to the persons themselves, to consider, judge, and say, whether it was possible for him to have gone any further, or no; as being confident, that they could not charge, or challenge him in this behalf: as neither did they. *What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* Yet the words immediately following, plainly shew, that they neither did repent, nor believe. *Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes?*

From

From whence it undeniably followeth, that when God advanceth to the highest pitch of Grace, when he judgeth meet to exert or put forth, in order to the conversion of any man, it remains yet in the power or liberty of this person, untill he be actually converted, not to be converted: and consequently, conversion is never wrought irresistibly.

2. The Scripture plainly declareth, that, when the spirit of God, did most seriously, most affectionately, with all possible tenderness, and this for a long time together, apply himself to the gaining, and converting men unto God, yet the effect of conversion did not follow, neither were the persons thus graciously and thus effectually intreated by God, gained hereby unto him. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them, which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as an Hen gathereth her Chickens together, and ye would not* a. When God most seriously, most affectionately, most tenderly, intends and attempts the conversion of men, it cannot be imagined but that he putteth forth himself with the greatest efficacy of strength and power for the procurement hereof, which he judgeth meet at any time (or at least, ordinarily, and in the standing course of his providence) to use in order to the obtaining of the like end. If then men under the most affectionate and effectual ap-

a Mat. 23. 37.

plica-

plications of God unto them for their conversion, may notwithstanding remain unconverted, evident it is that conversion is not wrought irresistibly.

3. The Scripture very frequently attributeth unto God a most pathetical and affectionate manner of dealing with wicked and impenitent men about their conversion, as that he *stretcheth out his hands unto them*, that he demandeth of them *why they will die*, or perish, that he wisheth and desireth *they would hearken unto him*, that he *hath compassion on them*, *&c.* Now all such gestures and expressions from him as these, must be looked upon only as theatrical, or as the mimique actings of love, friendship, pity, *&c.* by players upon a stage, in case it be supposed that they do not import a a reality and cordialness of intentions in God for the great good of conversion towars those, to whom they are made, and relate; and consequently, a real communication unto them of such a measure of strength or assistance for their conversion, which he is wont to afford unto those, whose conversion he most cordially intends, and who come actually to be converted thereby. For otherwise, all the said expressions would amount to no more, than as if a man should in a solemn and grave manner, and with a serious contest of words, urge and intreat a person, that is both deaf and dumb, that he would speak; and such applications of his not succeeding, as to

cause this poor man to speak, should hereupon affectionately complain, and enter a grand contest with him, because he did not speak.

4. The Scripture deeply chargeth some impenitent persons with resisting the Holy Ghost. *Ye stiff necked, and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, ye do alwaies resist the Holy Ghost: as your Fathers did, so did ye* a. It is plain, that such a *resistance* is here meant, which was joyned with impenitency and unbelief. Now if the real intent of the Holy Ghost in his workings, strivings, and contendings with these men, was not to convert, and bring them home unto God, (and consequently, his workings in them of that kind of working, by which men ordinarily are converted) but on the contrary either to leave them still unconverted, or to subject them to a greater condemnation, they might more properly and truly be said, to have complied or comported with the *Holy Ghost* in that sinful carriage here laid to their charge, than to have *resisted* him. For he that goeth along with a man in his Intentions, and especially who doth that, without which such a mans ends cannot be obtained, cannot (in any tolerable propriety of Speech) be said to resist him.

a Act. 7. 51.

5. The Scripture records these words spoken by the Lord *Christ* unto the stubborn and unbelieving Jews.— *But these things I say, that ye might be saved* a. And the Coun-

a Joh. 5. 34.

sel,

ſel, or gracious intentions of God in the Miniſtry of *John* Baptiſt, are thus expreſſed: *The ſame came for a witneſs, to bear witneſs of the light, That all men through him might believe* b. Now from ſuch paſſages as theſe we cannot but reaſon thus: If *Chriſt*'s intentions in thoſe things he ſpake unto the *Jews*, were their ſalvation, or, that they *might be ſaved*, then muſt he needs be ſuppoſed, in, by, and with thoſe ſayings of his to have vouchſafed unto them ſuch a meaſure or degree of Grace in order hereunto, (we mean their ſalvation) by which they might have been, and by which men ordinarily are, ſaved. He that certainly knows that ſuch or ſuch an end cannot be obtained, without ſuch a proportion of means uſed by himſelf in order thereunto, by which ſuch like ends are wont to be, or at leaſt may be, obtained, and yet ſhall refuſe to uſe ſuch means, (eſpecially when the uſe of them is no waies prejudicial unto him) cannot with truth be ſaid to intend ſuch an end. But evident it is, that the Jews, to whom Chriſt thus ſpake, and whoſe ſalvation he intended, were not ſavingly (we mean, as to matter of ſucceſs, or effect) wrought upon; for it ſoon after followeth: *But ye will not come unto me that ye might have life* c. Therefore converſion is not wrought irreſiſtibly. There is the ſame conſideration of the other place alſo.

b Joh. 1: 7.

c verſe 40.

6. The Scripture very frequently aſcribes

regeneration, or conversion unto the Word of God, or the Gospel. *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth* d. See also, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. with 25. 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. *Rom.* 10. 17. *&c.* Now if conversion be wrought by any irresistible power of the Holy Ghost, we are not able to conceive how the Word should be instrumental, or have any part or fellowship in the work. For if the work of conversion be effected or accompished with an irresistibleness of power, there is no place for the interest or interposure of the Word about it. Or if it shall be said to be wrought by an irresistible or necessitating power, and yet by the instrumental efficiency of the word also, then it directly follows, that one and the same work, at one and the same time, may be wrought both resistibly, and irresistibly. For certain it is, that the efficiency or operation of the Word, which consisteth of exhortations, promises, threatnings, and other Arguments of encouragement and perswasion (and consequently, is only moral) is resistible; yea, and is (according to our Brethrens own principles, and frequent concessions) frequently resisted. Or if it should be said, that the Word worketh conversion irresistibly, and the Spirit also irresistibly, then should there be a combination of two irresistible powers or operations to produce one and the same work: and if so, then (questionless) either the one, or the other, must be superfluous.

d Jam. 1. 18.

7. The

7. The Scripture in the Parable of the Talents, preſenteth thoſe Servants, who were diligent and faithful in what was committed unto them, inveſted with commendations by their Lord and Maſter, upon the account of their faithfulneſs. *His Lord ſaid unto him, well done, thou good and faithful Servant* a, *&c.* And again, — *Well done good and faithful Servant* b, *&c.* And elſe-where, ſuch as believed, are ſaid to *have obtained a good report through their Faith* c. Now if the Servants were neceſſitated, or irreſiſtibly brought to be faithful, or upon ſuch terms, that it was not poſſible for them to be other, there is no ground or colour at all why they ſhould be ſo highly commended for it. In like manner, if the Saints of old, were made to believe irreſiſtibly, or whether they would, or no, they obtained their good report without cauſe. Praiſe and commendations are the regular rewards of ſuch actions, not which men are neceſſitated, or irreſiſtibly drawn unto, but of ſuch, which being worthy and good, are voluntarily performed by them, and when it was in their power either not to have done them, or to have done the contrary. A poor Heathen that performs an ordinary moral action freely, and without being neceſſitated unto it, deſerves more praiſe and commendation upon true account, than ſuch a *Chriſtian*, who believeth upon terms of irreſiſtibility, and becauſe he could not help it, or do otherwiſe.

a Mat. 25. 21.
b ver. 23.
c Heb. 11. 39.

8. The Scripture (as was formerly observed *d*) often mentioneth the Faith and Repentance of those who do repent and believe, as matter of shame and disparagement unto those who do neither; yea, and as evincing the equity or justness of their condemnation. Now if it be supposed, that all those who do repent, and believe, are put upon these actions by a strong and irresistible hand, and that they are in no capacity to withstand that power, by which they are drawn unto them, their repenting and believing, are no matter of shame or confusion of face (no, not so much as in colour, or pretence) to those, who neither repent, nor believe, considering that these (at least according to our Brethrens Doctrine) have not so much as a sufficiency of power to do either. It is no disparagement to a man, that he moveth not between Heaven and Earth with as much expedition as an Angel; much less doth it argue, that he deserves to be punished, because he doth it not: nor is it any disgrace to any interior Star, that it shineth not like the Sun in his might; much less is it any reasonable ground why it should be plucked out of his place in the Firmament of Heaven, and thrown down to the Earth.

d Pag. 59.

9. The Scripture (whereof also notice hath been already given *e*) very frequently, and with some emphaticalness of assertion, attributeth unto God, the honour of that most worthy property, not to accept,

e Pag. 67.

or

or respect persons; but to *judge and reward every man according to his work*, *i. e.* according to the equitable consideration of every mans work, all circumstances duely weighed, and compared. Now we cannot conceive, but that God must needs shew himself a *respecter of persons*, and be far from *rewarding every man according to his work*, in case he shall award the great prize of eternal life unto some, only for, or upon, the doing of that, which, had they not been necessitated by an irresistible hand to do, they would never have done; and the most dreadful doom of eternal fire against others, for, or upon, the non-performance of that, which they had no power to do, though (haply) they have been more willing to do, and more faithful in doing what they had strength & power to do, than the others.

10. The Scripture (of which likewise we took cognisance upon another occasion *b*) presenteth the Lord *Christ*, as marvelling at the unbelief of some, to their reproof and shame. So also at the Faith and belief of others, to their honour and praise. *When Jesus heard it, he* Marvelled, *and said to them that followed, verily I say unto you, I have not found so great* Faith, *no, not in Israel* a. It *Christ* judged the Faith of this Centurion a due occasion of *marvelling*, and this to his honour, it is to us a demonstrative argument or sign, that it was not raised or wrought in him by any irresistible or necessitating operation of the power

b Pag. 58.

a Mat. 8. 10.

of God; or at leaſt, that the Lord *Chriſt* did not ſo conceive or judge of it. For who marvels at that, which he knoweth could not otherwiſe be? or which he knoweth comes connſtantly & uniformly to paſs in like caſes? It is no marvel to ſee Figgs growing on a Figg-tree, nor Grapes upon a Vine; nor to ſee a mans feet at a diſtance from the ground, whil'ſt he rides upon a tall Horſe; nor to ſee a ſtone moving upwards into the Air, when it is thrown up with a mans hand: no more is it, to ſee a man believing, though at never ſo great a rate, when we know he is neceſſitated unto it, and can do none other; at leaſt this is no matter of praiſe to him.

11. The Scripture taketh notice of the unbelief of the *Jews* under ſo many miracles as *Chriſt* had wrought amongſt them, as a thing very remarkable and ſtrange. *But though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him* b. If he had wrought ten thouſand miracles more, and greater, amongſt them, than thoſe which now he had wrought, their non-believing on him had been no waies ſtrange, or conſiderable, if it be ſuppoſed that no man can believe but by an irreſiſtible working of the power of God. It is no ſtrange thing, nor much to be minded, that a man ſtark-blind ſhould not read on a Book, though there be 20 Candles burning bright before him on the Table, it being generally known, that no proportion of light

b Joh. 12. 37.

light whatsoever is any advantage at all to help, or cause, a blind man to see. Nor is it strange that a Child, who hath learned to spell *English*, should not understand a Chapter in an *Hebrew* Bible, though the letter and print of it be never so fair. The non-performance of such things, which are known impossibilities, is no mans observation or wonder.

12. The Scripture reporteth these words from the mouth of our Saviour. *Wo unto thee, Corazin, wo unto thee Bethsaida: for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sydon, they would have repented long ago in Sack-cloth and Ashes* c. From hence to us it plainly appears, and this by a double argument, that the converting grace of God is not irresistible, 1. Because those means, or that Grace, which would have been converting unto some, had it been vouchsafed unto them, was vouchsafed unto others, who notwithstanding were not converted by it: which of necessity they must have been, had this Grace been irresistible. 2. Because a sufficiency of power or means for conversion is here asserted unto great works, or miracles (as elsewhere we read of some actually converted by them *a*) whose influence, or working notwithstanding upon the judgements and Consciences of men, to perswade, or over-rule them into the belief of any thing, is but moral, and consequently, resistible; even as we read of many,

c Mat. 11. 21. Compare also herewith, Ezek. 3. 7.

a Act. 8. 6, 7. Mat. 27. 54. Joh. 7. 31. Joh. 4. 48. (besides many other places.)

ny, who in the very face and presence of many miracles, remained unconverted and unbelieving.

13. The Scripture likewise exhibiteth God himself, speaking thus unto his Prophet: *Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not: they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house* b. From hence we cannot but conceive, and argue, that if when God calleth, yea, urgeth and presseth men to repent and convert, and withal vouchsafeth unto them means every waies sufficient hereunto (expressed by, *eyes to see, and ears to hear*) and yet they may, and sometimes do, remain *rebellious*, *i. e.* impenitent and unconverted (at least) then the Grace, or gracious operation which he exerteth about, for, and in order to, the conversion of men, is not irresistible, but only such, which may, and often doth, leave them rebellious.

b Ezek. 12. 2.

14. If God intendeth ordinarily to convert, yea, and ordinarily doth convert men by the Gospel, then is not the working of Grace about conversion, infrustrable, or irresistible. The Reason (as hath been formerly signified) is, because the Gospel, according to the nature of it, consisting only of precepts, promises, exhortations, encouragements, threatnings, *&c.* worketh only morally, which kind of operation may, and frequently is, resisted. And if it be said, that men are not converted by the Gos-

Gospel, without the irresistible working of the Holy Ghost with it, or by it, then it follows, that the effect of conversion dependeth upon the joynt concurrence of two causes, the one resistible in its efficiency, the other irresistible, which is impossible, and imports no less than a contradiction. For when an effect depends upon two causes, in, or about the production of it, if either of these causes be frustrable, the raising of the effect must needs be liable to frustration also; which yet is inconsistent with the irresistibility of working in either of these causes towards it. And to us its a clear case, that the Doctrine of irresistible Grace, doth utterly abolish the necessity and use of that blessed Instrument, sanctified by God for the conversion of men (we mean, the Gospel) together with the Ministry and preaching of it in the World, at least in respect of any usefulness in it for conversion.

15. If a necessitating, or irresistible work of Grace be absolutely necessary for conversion, then must it needs follow, that no person can, or could, possibly convert, or be converted, until the very time wherein he is converted actually. If so, then is it in vain (at least in reference to conversion) for men to attend upon the word preached, or to regard any other means of conversion vouchsafed unto them by God, until they be thus irresistibly surprized, acted, and necessitated by him to convert. And what is

this

this, (being interpreted) but to teach men that, which otherwiſe, and without occaſion or encouragement miniſtred by any Doctrine, they are more than apt enough to learn, we mean, ſecurity, together with the neglect and contempt of the Goſpel, and the Miniſtry of it?

16. If there be no poſſibility that any other men ſhould be converted, but only thoſe, who are actually converted by an irreſiſtible power, then is there no end imaginable, worthy the Grace, goodneſs, or wiſdom of God, in his calling ſuch perſons to repentance and converſion, who never come to be converted. As for thoſe ends commonly pretended, as, 1. The rendring of ſuch perſons inexcuſable; Or, 2. The declaring of his ſeverity upon them; Or, 3. The teaching of them their duty, or what they ought to do; Or, 4. The tryal of their obedience, (with the like) we clearly apprehend them to be no waies attainable by any ſuch applications of God unto them, which are inſufficient to convert them.

17. We cannot but judge our Brethrens Doctrine of irreſiſtible Grace, to be a Doctrine ill comporting with the Goſpel, becauſe it frowns upon Godlineſs, and (in the Scripture phraſe) ſuffers not men to lift up their hearts to the means, or waies, of it. For he that ſhall perſwade men, that they can never be godly, how ardently ſoever they ſhall deſire it, how diligently ſoever they

they ſhall uſe the beſt means to attain it, untill they come to be over-ruled by a ſtrong and irreſiſtible hand into it, what doth he elſe but cut the ſinews, and break the very heart of all deſires and endeavours of men after it: yea, and in effect ſay unto them, that they will every whit as ſoon, and as certainly, become godly, though they walk in the deepeſt waies of looſneſs and prophaneneſs, as if they ſhould exerciſe themſelves never ſo diligently in the beſt duties, or actions, whereof they are capable. This is the clear voice of the Doctrine of irreſiſtible Grace.

18. The ſaid Doctrine of irreſiſtible Grace, we apprehend, and this in clearneſs of viſion (as we are humbly, and Chriſtianly confident) abſolutely deſtroyeth, as far as lyeth in a Doctrine to do, the very nature, eſſence, and being, of Free Grace. For whereas the nature of this Grace is, ſo, and upon ſuch terms, to aid, aſſiſt, and bleſs the poor Creature man, as to inveſt him with a regular and due capacity, through believing, of that great recompence of reward, ſalvation; they who teach that it irreſiſtibly neceſſitates men to believe, cauſeth, or maketh men to believe, upon no better terms, than only becauſe they can do none other, do (in effect, and with clearneſs of interpretation) teach, that it only enableth men to believe, ſo, or after ſuch a manner, as to render their Faith (and conſequently, their other ſervices alſo, for

theſe

these all depend upon their Faith) unrewardable by God. No Law, no rule of justice, or equity, provideth any reward for such actions, to the performance whereof the doers were, or should be, necessitated by a strong and irresistible hand. Yea, we conceive, that there is more reason of the two, why actions meerly natural, and as such, as eating, drinking, speaking, walking, &c. should be rewarded by God, than any such actions, whereunto men are necessitated by a power extra-essential to them. This Argument the Reader may find further opened and confirmed else-where *a*.

a Redemption Redeemed, p. 319.

19. We are much confirmed that we have truth on our side in this particular of our dissent, because as far as we have had opportunity, to understand the sense of Orthodox and Learned Antiquity in the point, we find them generally ours; according to the import of these sayings. *Neither the reward of good* (*saith* Tertullian) *nor yet of evil, would justly be adjudged to such a man, who is found either good or evil, by necessity, not by will* b. And Jerome: *God hath made us with liberty of will, neither are we drawn by necessity, either to vertue or vice: otherwise, where necessity takes place, there is neither damnation, nor Crown* c, [i. e. neither Heaven nor Hell.] So likewise Ber-

b *Cæterum nec boni, nec mali merces jure pensaretur ei, qui aut bonus, aut malus necessitate fuit inventus, non voluntate.* Tert. Lib. 2. *contra Marcion.* c. *Liberi arbitrii nos condidit Deus; nec ad virtutes, nec ad vitia, necessitate trahimur: alioquin ubi necessitas est, nec damnatio, nec corona est.* Hieron.

hard:

nard? It is only a will free from compulsion and necessity, which maketh a Creature capable of reward and punishment d.

d *Sola voluntas, quoniam pro sua ingenita libertate, nulla vi, nulla beatitudine seu miseria dignam ac capacem creaturam constituit, prout scilicet justitiæ injusticiave consenserit.* Bern. de Grat. & lib. Arbitrio.

20. The frequent and full testimonies of accord with the Doctrine maintained by us in the point in hand, which we meet with both from the pens, and from the lips, of our adversaries themselves (at least so esteemed) give us measure of assurance, heaped up, and running over, that in this our dissent from our Brethren, we are blameless, and have the truth with us. *He* (saith *Ursin*, speaking of God) *governs and bows, doth not ravish or force, the wills of Creatures: that is, by certain Objects presented to the mind, he effectually moves* [or perswades] *the will to move. For the will being moved by God, is able* [or, at liberty] *not only to resist, but also to assent unto God moving, and this with her own and proper motion* a. Our Brethren of the Ministry in their Sermons, ever and anon bring forth out of their Treasury things both new and old, of a manifest comportance with us in the particular in hand.

a *Regit & flectit voluntates creaturarum non rapit, aut cogit; hoc est, ostensis menti objectis, efficaciter movet voluntatem ad movendum. Potest enim voluntas mota a Deo, non tantum repugnare, sed etiam assentire Deo moventi, suo ac proprio motu.* Ursin. Catec. p. 54, 55.

21. Lastly; neither have we as yet found any thing in the Scriptures, nor in any Argument, one or more, from those who dissent from us in the business yet under consider-

consideration, which doth any waies balance, in our judgements, the weight of those Scriptures, together with the Arguments built upon them, which have been produced and insisted upon by us for our justification herein.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the fourth General Head of Doctrine, The Power of the Creature Man, *in things tending to Salvation.*

Particulars of Agreement about the fourth general Head of Doctrine propounded.

1. WE hold, *That all men by nature* [i.e. *considered as sometimes in the loyns of* Adam, *and as descended from him by natural propagation*] *are Children of wrath, and liable to condemnation.* And herein we doubt not but our Brethren bear us company with their judgement.

2. We hold, and judge, *That all those dispositions and inclinations unto good, which were vested in the nature of man in his Creation, were forfeited, lost, and ruin'd by his fall.* Neither do we question but that our Brethren and we make only one mind between us in this.

3. We hold further, *That no person of mankind, by nature,* [i.e. *considered as one of the house and lineage of the first* Adam.] *hath any strength, power, or disposition, to mind or will any thing that is spiritually good.* We know

know we have our Brethrens good will in this likewise.

4. We yet hold, *That men and women (generally) walking according to the course of this World, and fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind, hereby become dead in sins and trespasses.* We have good assurance of our Brethrens concurrence with us in this too.

5. We hold, *That no person being dead in sins and trespasses, hath any power to quicken himself,* [i. e. *the Apostle himself being the interpreter, to forgive himself his trespasses,* Col. 2. 13.] Neither do we fear our Brethrens discontent in this.

6. We hold, *That no person of mankind is sufficient of himself to think, or reason, any thing* [*of a saving tendency, either to himself, or others,*] *as of himself: but that every mans sufficiency (in this kind) is of God.* Our Brethren (we believe) are as deeply baptized into this Faith, as we.

7. We hold, *That no person can truly repent, or believe, without the gracious presence and assistance of the Spirit of God with him:* We doubt not but that we meet with our Brethrens sense here also.

8. We hold, *That no flesh hath any reasonable or just ground of boasting in it self, before God, but only in God, and in the freeness and riches of his Grace.* We know that our Brethren are not our enemies in this neither.

Particulars of dissent about the fourth Head of Doctrine.

So that if in any thing we dissent from our Brethren about this head of Doctrine, it is chiefly, or only, in these three particulars.

1. We hold, that, as all men lost the Grace and favour of God, whereof they stood possessed in their Creation, and during integrity, in the first *Adam* by his fall; so likewise they are through the free Grace of God, restored again hereunto in the second *Adam*, by his righteousness or obedience. Our Brethrens judgement suffers them not (it seems) to magnifie the free Grace of God with us in this point.

2. We hold not only that all persons without exception, are put into an actual possession of the favour of God, by his Grace in the gift of *Jesus Christ*, which possession they still keep during infancy, and until the commission of actual sin; but further, that all men living to years of discretion, and more especially whilst they have not yet fowly corrupted, or wretchedly hardened themselves by long continuance in waies of known sins, are by the same Grace put into a good capacity of Salvation; so that if they be not wanting to themselves, and this in a very gross, palpable, and unworthy manner, they may, by the Grace of God vouchsafed unto them, come to repent, and believe, and persevere believing unto salvation. We understand that this Grace of God also is opposed by our Brethren.

3. We

3. We hold, that at any time (excepting only times of possible distemper,) even after long continuance and obduration in sin, in case men have not sinned that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, (a guilt which we judge to be contracted by few, or none, in these daies) they have yet such a presence of the gracious and good spirit of God in them, or with them, whereby they are inabled so to awake and recollect themselves, and to recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, by whom they have been taken captive, (although we judge withal, that there is far less probability, or ground of hope, that such will recover, or repent, than there is of the repentance of those, whose sins are not of like growth, or continuance.) We know our Brethren do not accompany us in the way of our Judgement here.

Reasons of dissent about the first particular under the fourth Doctrine.

The grounds of our dissent in the first of these particulars, we have delivered already in the account given for our dissent in the third particular under the first Head of Doctrine. For if the vertue or saving efficacy of the Grace and gift of Christ, be commensurable, in the extent thereof, and in respect of the number of persons related unto, with the guilt or condemning force of *Adams* sin, then with pregnancy of consequence it follows, that as all men sustained the unspeakable loss of the favour of God, in, and by means of, the fall of the first *Adam*, and therefore considered in their natu-

natural relation unto him, and as deſcended from him by carnal propagation, muſt needs be looked upon as *Children of wrath*; ſo conſidered as that *ſpecies* or kind of Creature, to whom the gift of *Chriſt*, and the ſuper-abounding Grace of God in this gift, have been vouchſafed and given, muſt with a like neceſſity be eſteemed a Generation reconciled unto God. There is nothing more common, than for perſons, as well as things, to be capable of contrary denominations, or attributions, in different reſpects. *As concerning the Goſpel* (ſaith *Paul*, ſpeaking to the Gentiles concerning the *Jews*) *they are* Enemies *for your ſakes: but as touching the Election, they are* Beloved *for the Fathers ſake. Rom.* 11. 28. *For even, that which was made* Glorious (he ſpeaks of the Miniſtry of the Law, comparing it with the Miniſtry of the Goſpel) *had* no Glory *in this reſpect, by reaſon of the Glory that excelleth, 2 Cor.* 3. 10. But although (as hath been ſignified) we have formerly laid down the grounds and reaſons (or rather, ſome of them only) of our diſſent in the particular in hand, yet we ſhall here adde ſomewhat further from the Scriptures, upon the ſame account.

1. From the mouth of our bleſſed Saviour we meet with theſe words, *Joh.* 8. 34. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, he that* Committeth *ſin, is the* Servant *of ſin.* From which we cannot but conclude, unleſs we ſhould diſſolve the force, and emphatical

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Authority of the words, that before, and until the commiſſion or perpetration of ſin, (*i. e.* untill the time of actual ſinning) perſons are no *Servants of ſin*; and conſequently, neither under the reigning, nor condemning power of ſin. The Scripture ſeems to make theſe two but one and the ſame, though Divines amongſt us, commonly diſtinguiſh them: *That as ſin hath reigned unto death, &c. Rom. 5.* 21. And if men and women be not the Servants of ſin, until the actual perpetration of ſin, certain it is, that they are in favour with God.

2. Words of a like import we find, *Rom. 6.* 16. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield your ſelves Servants to obey, his Servants you are, to whom ye obey; whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs,* [*i. e.* unto the juſtification of life as in the next preceding Chapter he had expreſſed it.] In theſe words, as far as we are capable of underſtanding them, the Apoſtle implyeth, 1. That mens *obeying* of *ſin*, is not a natural or neceſſitated act, but free and voluntary: men may be taken Priſoners, or made Captives, againſt their wills, but they cannot *yield themſelves*, but with their wills. 2. That men are not the Servants of ſin, untill they have *yielded* themſelves for ſuch, *i. e.* voluntarily conſented unto the ſervice. 3. (and laſtly,) That it is this voluntary yielding of themſelves to the ſervice and obedience of ſin, which renders

them liable unto *death* and condemnation, and consequently, that they were not obnoxious hereunto before.

3. We do not find the sentence of eternal death any where in the Scriptures, awarded, or denounced, against infants, or persons dying before the perpetration of actual sin: nor yet any others termed *dead in sins and trespasses*, but only those, who have *walked in them, according to the course of this World, &c. Ephes.* 2. 1, 2. And therefore cannot but judge that it would be high presumption in us to condemn those whom we cannot find condemned by God.

4. Lastly, we cannot judge it any waies reasonable, equitable, or as looking like to one of the waies of God, that having stroke and established a new Covenant, a Covenant of Grace and favour with the World, after, and upon the transgression of *Adam*, he should take the advantage against any person, of his miscarriage under the first Covenant, or proceed to his eternal condemnation otherwise than upon delinquency, and this not light, or ordinary, against the Covenant now in force, or being.

Reasons of dissent in the second particular under the fourth Head.

Concerning our dissent in the second of the three particulars lately mentioned, we have also accounted for it already, *viz.* in the reasons given for our dissent in the second particular, (as likewise in the sixth) under the first Head. And again, in the reasons

reasons assigned by us for our dissent in the first particular under the second Head: but especially, and most appropriately, in the reasons laid down by us for our dissent in the second particular under the third and last preceding Head. For in these we proved, that the Grace of God in the vouchsafement of means sufficient for salvation, is diffusive, not to a determinate parcel, or smaller number of men, but through the generality of mankind. And conceiving that enough hath been said by us already for our justification in dissenting from our Brethren in the point now before us, we shall neither make repitition, nor addition of any thing; but desire the Reader, for his satisfaction, to consult the premises, whereunto he hath been directed.

Reasons of dissent in the third (and last) particular under the fourth Head,

We are constrained to dissent in the third, and last particular under this fourth Head, by the authority of these Scripture considerations, over our judgments and Consciences.

1. God himself, having first informed his Prophet, that *he dwelt in the midst of a rebellious house, which had eyes to see, and yet saw not, and ears to hear, and yet heard not, because they were a rebellious house*, notwithstanding immediately subjoyns: *Therefore thou Son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight, and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight*; It May be they will consider, though they be a rebellious House. *Ezek.* 12. 2. 3.

By Considering, we cannot think but that he means such a consideration, which would produce, and issue in true repentance; according to that of *David*; *I have considered my wayes, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. Psal.* 119. 59. Now unless it be supposed that this *rebellious* and obdurate people, had, notwithstanding their long continued rebellion, such a principle of grace in them, by the excitement and stirring up whereof they were capable of such a consideration, and consequently of repentance, there had been no place for this expectation in God concerning them, *it may be they will Consider.*

2. 2 *Chron.* 36. 14, 15, 16. We find this passage upon sacred record. *Moreover all the chief of the Priests, and the people transgressed very much, after the abominations of the Heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes, and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place. But they mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.* Evident it is from these words, first, that the people here spoken of, had been rebellious against God of a long time, before his *wrath arose against them*, and destroyed them. Secondly, as evident it is, that yet they were in a capacity,

ty, under some possibility, (at least) of repenting, whilst the Ministry of the Prophets was continued unto them, yea until the very day wherein they were destroyed. Otherwise the sending of Messengers and Prophets unto them by God to the very last, had been no argument of his *Compassions* towards them, It is no Argument of much pitty to the dead, that a Physician should be sent unto him.

3. When God said thus: *My spirit shall not alwaies strive with man* [meaning, in reproving, exciting, admonishing, perswading him to repent] *for that he also is flesh*, [*i. e.* though he be a weak, foolish, and frail Creature, meaning, that this consideration of man, did prevail with him, to spare him the longer, and to afford him the helpful presence of his spirit accordingly, in order to his eternal comfort and peace, *Psal.* 103. 14.] *yet his dayes shall be an hundred and twenty years*, *Gen.* 6. 3. he clearly supposeth, that the men then in the World, of whom he speaketh more particularly, by the help of his spirit which he was willing should wrastle and strive with them accordingly, all the time here mentioned and prescribed, would be in a capacity of repenting, even to the last period and moment of the said time, though in the mean time they should remain wicked, stubborn, and impenitent.

4. When God addresseth himself thus to the *Jewes* after a long continued course of wickedness and rebellion, *Cast away from you*

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all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit, demanding thus of them, *For why will ye dye, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth* a, &c. he plainly supposeth, that yet there was such a presence of his Grace and good Spirit with them, that it was no matter of impossibility for them so to alter the frame of their hearts, and change the tenor of their lives and ways, that, whereas they were at present under the stroak and dint of the heavy displeasure of God, and little better then prepared for destruction, they might notwithstanding come off upon terms of honour, safety, and peace.

a Ezek. 18. 31, 32

5. When the Apostle *Paul* demandeth thus, *And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance* a, &c. it cannot (in our apprehensions) be conceived, but that he takes it for granted, or at least as a thing that men may easily come to know, that the *goodness* of God expressing it self unto men, how wicked, or vile soever, in his *forbearance and long suffering, towards them*, all the time of its being thus continued unto them, *leadeth* [i. e. inviteth, alloreth, perswadeth] *them to repentance*; and consequently that such men, by the help of some principle

a Rom. 2. 3, 4.

ciple or other within them, are in a capacity all this while of being *led* [home] or brought, to repentance by it. A man who is in an utter incapacity to repent, cannot be said to be *led to Repentance* by any thing, or means, whatsoever.

6. So again when the same Apostle exhorteth *Timothy* to *instruct in meekness those that oppose themselves*, [*viz.* out of an habit, or setled disposition, as the word imports,] *if God peradventure* [or rather, at any time, *nosse*] *will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth, And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil* b, *&c.* without controverlie supposeth, that such men are not at any time, whilst they may be *instructed*, devested of all power, or capacity, to *repent*, and so to *recover themselves out of the Devils snare*. And whereas he expresseth himself thus; *If God peradventure will give them Repentance*, he doth not imply that God may possibly come upon them with an irresistible power, and make them to *repent*, whether they will or no; (*Timothy* needed not to *instruct them with meekness*, for the bringing of them to repentance upon such terms) but that it might so come to passe, that God by the secret excitements and workings of that good spirit of his with them, which was not yet wholly departed, or taken from them, might perswade them to hearken to *Timothies* instructions, being *meek* and gentle, and consequently to imbrace

b 2 Tim. 2. 25.

to imbrace and own the Truth taught by him.

7. Lastly, when the same *Apostle* presenteth God, or the Scripture, speaking, incouraging, and exhorting thus, *Awake thou that sleepest, stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light* a, he plainly, and without parable, supposeth, 1. That he that *sleepeth*, [*viz.* in carnal security, and sensuality,] is yet capable of awakening himself out of it: for otherwise God doth not admonish, or call upon men to do that, we mean, to perform that part in acting, which is only proper for himself to perform; especially he doth not encourage them with promises to do it. 2. That even he that is *dead*, [*i. e.* that is in a dying or perishing posture, in appearance like unto a man bereft of all spiritual sense and motion, ready to perish eternally,] hath yet such a spark, or principle of life in him which can be nothing but the spirit of God, or nothing without it, by the ventilation, stirring up, and improvement whereof, he may, *stand up from* amongst his fellows, *dead* in like manner in sins and trespasses with him; *i. e.* either so betake himself unto *Jesus Christ*, as to receive from him the light of life truly spiritual, and which is accompanied with salvation; or else so to prepare himself, so to posture his heart and soul with longing desires, and studious inquiries after God, after righteousness, and after the things of his peace, that *Jesus Christ*,

a Ephes. 5. 14.

Chriſt, according to the unſearchable riches of his Grace, and his frequent promiſes made in ſuch a behalf, will reveal himſelf unto him, and cauſe the light of his ſalvation to ſhine upon him.

CHAP. V.

Concerning the fifth and laſt general Head of Doctrine, The Perſeverance of the Saints.

1. WE hold, *That true and ſound Believers, as ſuch, and remaining ſuch, can never fall away, either totally, or finally, from the Grace and favour of God.* This Doctrine (we know) is our Brethrens belief as well as ours.

Particulars of Agreement about the fifth and laſt general Head of Doctrine.

2. We hold, *That true Believers, and perſons truly juſtified before God, may poſſibly fall into very horrid ſins, grieve the good ſpirit of God, incur his indignation, and contract a damnable guilt.* Our Brethren, if we may eſtimate their judgement in the caſe, by ſome of the moſt intelligent, and beſt learned of their party, profeſs the ſame things *in terminis* with us *a*.

a Dr. *Prideaux Lect. 6. De Perſeverantia Sanctorum & Acta Synod. Nation. Dordr. part. 2. 3. p. 192.*

3. We hold, *That God hath promiſed unto true Believers ſuch ſupplies and interpoſures of his good ſpirit, from time to time, which are abundantly ſufficient to preſerve them from falling away; if themſelves be not ſlothful, and*

and extreamly negligent in the things of their peace. Our Brethren (we know) cannot dissent from us in this.

4. We hold, *That what supplies soever of his Grace and good Spirit God any where promiseth unto true Believers, in order to their perseverance, he alwaies exhibiteth according to the tenor and intent of these promises.* Neither do we fear reproof from our Brethren for being thus minded, themselves being of the same mind with us.

5. Our Brethren hold and teach, *That many, who have been first in appearance and profession of Saintship and true godliness, may, and often do, prove last, falling away both totally and finally.* Our Brethren have no adversaries amongst us in this Doctrine.

6. Our Brethren hold and teach, *That true Believers can have no peace, no comfort, no assurance, of their justification, or reconciliation with God, whilst they neglect the study of holiness, walk loosly, lie impenitently under the guilt of any great and known sin, neglect the use of means appointed by God for the enabling of them to persevere, &c.* The same Doctrine is our Brethrens, and ours, in this point also.

a *Acta Syn. Nation. Dordr. part. 2. p. 197.*

7. Our Brethren hold and teach, *That when regenerate or justified persons, through their own fault, or corruption, fall into the perpetration of horrid sins, they lose their present aptitude or meetness (they mean, that aptitude which they had before the Commission of such*

such sins) for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven b. Neither have we any Doctrine amongst us opposite hereunto.

b *Acta Syn. Nation. Dordr.* part. 2. p. 192.

8. Our Brethren hold and teach yet further, *That the unchangeable Ordination of God requireth, that a Believer, breaking out into such enormous transgressions, must first by a renewed act of Faith and Repentance return into the way, before he can be brought to the end of his way, the Kingdom of Heaven* c. We believe as our Brethren believe, in this likewise.

c *Ibid.* p. 193.

9. Our Brethren yet hold and grant beyond this, *That a Believer, between guilt contracted by some grievous sin, one, or more, and the renewing of his Faith and Repentance, stands as a sinner to be condemned upon the account of his own demerit, and not as a person actually absolved, until he hath obtained pardon by the stirring up of his Faith and Repentance* d. We know no reason why to break company with our Brethren at this turn neither.

d *Ibidem.*

10. Our Brethren moreover hold and teach, *That persons supernaturally enlightened, by means whereof they may understand those things to be true, which are declared in the word of God, and yield an unfeigned assent unto them, yea, and have their affections in part changed, and their waies to a degree reformed, and who, in the judgement of charity, are, and ought to be, judged, Believers, persons justified, and sanctified, may notwithstanding fall away totally and finally* a. And the truth is,

a *Acta Syn. Nation. Dordr.* part. 2. p. 188, 189, 190.

is, that holding and granting these things, in true interpretation, they hold and grant all that we affirm or hold in this head of Doctrine, in opposition (as we are conceived, and without cause blamed) to them; as hath been demonstratively proved elsewhere *here*.

§ Redemption Redeemed, p. 396, 397, 398, &c.

11. Our Brethren hold and teach, *That it doth not spring, or arise, from regenerate men themselves, or from their will, that they fall not wholly away from Faith, Holiness, and Adoption, but from the special love of God, and his operation in them, together with the intercession and safe-keeping of Christ.* Neither do they assert any thing in this, but what we can (only being allowed an Orthodox sense of the words) freely subscribe unto.

12. They teach, *That the perseverance of the Saints is the gratuitous or free gift of God.* If our Brethren be as Orthodox in their sense, as they are in their words, we are no adversaries to them at this point neither. We hold, *That when any Saint persevereth unto the end, it is of the free donation or gift of God, and that the Grace by which he persevereth, is not procured or acquired by any merit, or worth of works whatsoever.*

So that all the distance between us and our Brethren about this fifth and last Head of Doctrine, may be measured and taken, by the opposition between these two positions only. They hold, that persons once true

true Believers, and truly juſtified, can never fall away from their Faith, either totally, or finally: we hold, that even ſuch perſons may fall away in both conſiderations. But far ſhould it be from us to diſſent from them in this, were not our Judgments and Conſciences over-awed with theſe, and ſuch like arguments from the Scriptures.

Reaſons of diſſent in one particular about the fifth and laſt head of Doctrine

1. We read of ſome, who having had a *good Conſcience*, *put away*, and hereby *concerning Faith made ſhipwrack*. 1 *Tim.* chap. 1. *ver.* 19. Nor can we imagine, that the Apoſtle by *making ſhipwrack of Faith*, ſhould mean the loſs or deprivation of any thing, but what, had it been kept by thoſe, who made *ſhipwrack* of it, would have been of a bleſſed and ſaving conſequence unto them; nor that that *good Conſcience*, which he expreſly ſaith ſome had *put* [or rather violently thruſt, or juſtled] *away*, was any other, then that ſpoken of, v. 5. out of which that *charity*, which is the *end of the Commandment*, proceedeth; or that, which he calls a *pure Conſcience*. 1 *Tim.* 3. 9. and again, 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. and is elſewhere termed a *good Conſcience*, *Heb.* 13. 18. and 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. And we are the more convincingly perſwaded he ſpeaks, both of ſuch a conſcience, and ſuch a *Faith*, which, had they been perſiſted in, would have accompanied ſalvation, becauſe he admoniſheth *Timothy* (in the beginning of the verſe) to *have* or to *hold* them faſt. *Having Faith and a good*

ἀπωσάμενοι.

Conſcience, which ſome having put away, concerning Faith, have made ſhipwrack. This Text of Scripture is elſewhere further argued to the clear eviction of the ſence now given; and what may reaſonably be objected, anſwered *a*.

a Redemption Redeemed. p. 353, 354. &c.

2. Again we read of the *overthrow* of the Faith of ſome by falſe Teachers,—*of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, ſaying that the Reſurrection is paſt already, and overthrow,* [ανατρεπουσι, ſubvert, or turn upſide down] *the Faith of ſome*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 18. That by *Faith* in this place, can be meant no hypocritical, feigned, or pretended Faith, but that which was real and truly juſtifying, is proved from the context it ſelf in the fore-named Diſcourſe *b*.

b Redemption Redeemed p. 358. 359. &c.

3. We find the righteous God himſelf declaring his own mind in the point in hand, by his Prophet *Ezekiel*, in theſe words. *When a righteous man turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done, ſhall he die*: Ezek. 18. 26. Firſt, that by the *righteous man* here mentioned, is meant a perſon truly righteous, and juſtified in the ſight of God: Secondly, that it is here clearly ſuppoſed, that even ſuch a righteous man as this, may poſſibly turn away from his righteouſneſs, and commit iniquity, yea and die in this apoſtacy: Thirdly (and laſtly) That the death here threatned by God againſt this righteous perſon, ſo apoſtatizing as

as is expreſſed, is eternal death; have been, at large, and againſt all contrary arguings and pretendings, evinced in the oft-mentioned Diſcourſe *a*.

a Redemption Redeemed. p. 270, 271, 272.

4. We cannot but conceive and judg, that by the juſt and equitable proceedings of the Lord, (in the parable, *Mat.* 18.) againſt that Servant of his, who ſo cruelly handled his fellow-Servant (as is there expreſſed) with whom he is ſaid to have been *wroth*, and to have *delivered him to the tormentors, till he ſhould pay the whole debt*, and this after he had forgiven it unto him, we cannot (we ſay) but conceive that the Lord *Chriſt*, in, and by this parabolical Hiſtory, informs his Diſciples (and together with them, the whole Generation of mankind) that if juſtified perſons themſelves, who have received compleat remiſſion of ſins from God, ſhall enormouſly tranſgreſs, eſpecially in ways of unmerciſulneſs, cruelty, and oppreſſion, they tranſfer and remove themſelves from under the bleſſed influence of that Decree of God, by which they were, and ſtood juſtified, and ſubject themſelves to another Decree of a contrary influence and import, by which they (with all others of the ſame rank of impiety with them) ſtand condemned, and guilty of eternal death. This to be the ſence and drift of the ſaid parable, the winding of it up by our Saviour in theſe words (to his Diſciples themſelves) makes fully manifeſt: *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive*

not every one his Brother their treſpaſſes. Mat 18. 35. The parable the Reader ſhall find opened and argued at large, and the reſult of it clearly and againſt all contradiction evicted to be the ſame (in ſubſtance) with what hath been now expreſſed, in the late-referenced Book *b*.

b Redemption Redeemed. p. 15. 152. 276. 277.

5. Neither do we know how to underſtand, or make any tolerable ſence of the Parable of the Sower (in ſome of the material paſſages of it) without the help of this principle, that true Faith, and ſuch, which perſevered in, would ſave men, may wholly wither, and come to nothing. For the reaſon why the fruit that ſprang from the ſeed, which fell in the ſtony ground, miſcarried and withered away, is not reſolved into the nature, kind, or property of it, but into the *lack of moiſture*, *Luk.* 8. 6. or into the *want of deepneſs of Earth*. *Mat* 13. 5. So likewiſe the reaſon of the miſcarriage of the thorny ground, was not becauſe that which ſprang up and grew (for a time) here, was of a baſtard or wild kind, or for the time it grew any ways differing from that, which the good ground it ſelf brought forth and bare, but becauſe the *thorns ſprang up* together *with the ſeed, and choaked it*, *Luk.* 8. 7. *Mat.* 13. 7. And the reaſon why the Profeſſors reſembled by the Rock, or ſtony ground, come ſhort of ſalvation, is not ſaid to be, becauſe they never beleeved (for they are expreſly ſaid to beleeve, *Luk.* 8. 13.) nor becauſe they never truly beleeved,

or

or becauſe they were never juſtified, or the like; but only becauſe *they had no root*, and *in times of perſecution fell away*. Which plainly ſheweth, that that Faith which was in them for a time, was juſtifying? and perſevered in unto the end, would have actually ſaved them: There is the like conſideration of thoſe portraictured by the thorny ground. But this Parable alſo the Reader (if he pleaſe) may find largely handled, and perſpicuouſly unfolded in the ſaid Treatiſe, entituled, *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 291, 292, 293, *&c.*

6. The Apoſtle likewiſe, (*Heb.* 6 4, 5 6, *&c.*) as far as we are able to conceive, moſt pregnantly and convincingly teacheth a poſſibility of defection from Faith, both total, and final, not ſimply in true Saints, but even in Saints of great eminency and worth, (for ſo we judge of the Apoſtles intent in the paſſage with the beſt of our underſtanding.) *For it is impoſſible for thoſe that were once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good Word of God, and the powers of the World to come, If they ſhall fall away* [*in the original* it is, καὶ παραπεσόντας, *i. e.* and falling away] *to renew them again unto repentance; ſeeing, &c.* We find all the Characters here ſpecified in thoſe, whoſe *falling away* (and this with an impoſſibility of repentance) is ſuppoſed, to be preſented by the Holy Ghoſt up and down the Scriptures from place to

place, as the appropriate and distinguishing Characters of true Believers. Besides, we cannot apprehend, how Hypocrites or formal Professors, can be said to *fall away* especially how they should, by their *falling away*, put themselves into an incapacity of being *renewed* Again by, or *unto*, *repentance*, when as they are supposed to have been never *renewed*, by or to, *repentance* before. This passage of Scripture likewise is fully and at large debated, and all expositions proved null, which are bent to carry it another way, in the late named Book, p. 282, 283, 284, &c.

7. That other passage of the same Apostle, (*Heb.* 10. 26, 27, 28, 29.) neither can we judge but to be of the same import with the former, holding forth the same Doctrine which we found there. *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries. He that despised* Moses *Law, died without mercy under two or three Witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despight unto the Spirit of Grace.* That to be *sanctified with the blood of the Covenant*, importeth true and real sanctification, and such which alwaies accom-

accompanieth juſtification, we conceive both from the ſcope of the place, and proper ſignificancy of the phraſe to be above all reaſonable denial. And that ſuch a ſanctification as this, ſuppoſing it to be the ſanctification here meant, may be wholly and for ever loſt, we judge, both by the expreſs tenor of the words, and by the carriage of the paſſage, to be unqueſtionable. However, this place alſo is diligently inquired unto, and upon an impartial examination found confederate with the Doctrine maintained by us in the particular in hand, in the ſame quarters of diſcourſe with the former paſſage.

8. The Apoſtle *Peter* alſo ſtrengtheneth our hand very much to the laying faſt hold on the ſame Doctrine, by putting theſe words into it, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. *For if after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the World through the knowledge* [or rather acknowledgement ἐν ἐπιγνώσει] *of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again intangled and overcome, the latter end is worſe with them, than the beginning.* In ſaying that *the latter end* of the men he ſpeaks of, *viz.* who are *re-intangled in the pollutions of the World, and overcome*; after a *clean*, or real, *eſcape from them* (v. 18.) is *worſe with them, than the beginning*, he clearly ſuppoſeth that they were in a good and ſaving condition from the time of ſuch their *eſcape*, untill their ſaid *re-intanglement*: Otherwiſe, and in caſe this *eſcape* had been but in ſhew only, and

they hypocrites under, and during their *acknowledgement of Jesus Christ*, he would rather have said, the latter end is worse with them, than their state under such an acknowledgment. For doubtless they are in a better condition, who never yet heard of, or professed the name of *Jesus Christ*, than those, who make a loose, hollow, or hypocritical profession of him; So that it had been *worse with them*, not only after their second *intanglement with the pollutions of the World*, but even whilst they were under the *escape* here specified, than it was *in the beginning*. But this Scripture, together with those lately cited upon the same account, and some others, have been by one of us more fully discussed heretofore *a*, and the Doctrine maintained in the particular in hand, demonstratively evicted and proved from them.

a Redemption Redeemed, chap. 12. throughout.

9. That which our Brethren most unduly, and unjustly, and contrary to the manifest tendency of our Doctrine concerning the possibility of the Saints total and final declining, charge upon it, as, *viz.* that it is injurious and destructive to the comforts of the Saints, that it must needs render the lives and conditions of true Believers miserable, and full of fears, &c. We judge to be (upon true account) chargeable upon theirs, and that that Doctrine, which avoucheth an inamissibility of the Grace and favour of God, is of confederacy with Satan in filling the minds and con-

consciences of the Saints with perplexities, and inextricable doubts, horrid fears, and questionings, about the truth of their Faith, and consequently, of their Salvation.

For, 1. Such a Doctrine, imposeth this hard task upon a man, to put him into the lowest degree of hope, or comfort, that he is a true Believer, *viz.* to prove and evidence to his own soul, that his Faith is better, *i. e.* more operative by love, and bearing more, and better fruits of righteousness, than the Faith of any person, who hath at any time apostatized from God, and his waies, ever was, or did. Otherwise, according to the import of that Doctrine, he can never come to have any certain knowledge, or assurance, no, nor yet any tolerable or well-grounded hope, that he is a true and sound Believer. And what savour of peace or comfort can there be in such a Doctrine or perswasion, as this, That true Believers can never fall away, unto such a man, who hath intangled himself with such a conceit, which will very hardly, if at all, suffer him to judge himself, at least upon good ground, a true Believer? Or who is there at this day under Heaven, that is able clearly, or upon a reasonable account, to prove unto his own conscience and soul, that his Faith abounds more with the fruits of righteousness, worketh at an higher and more excellent rate of love, than the Faith of any Back-slider ever did? Again, 2. Such

2. Such a Doctrine which is any waies encouraging, or tempting, not simply unto loosness, and vile practices, but even to a continuance and obduration herein, must needs, and this according to our Brethrens own principles, bereave men of all spiritual joy, comfort, and peace, occasion them to doubt and question their justification, and soundness of believing: as on the contrary, such a Doctrine, the tendency whereof clearly worketh the hearts and consciences of men to an awful reverence of God, and watchfulness against sin, and breaking out of corruption, must needs be of a rich sympathy with the peace and spiritual comforts of Believers. That our Brethrens Doctrine (in the point under present consideration) is of the former complexion and constitution, and ours (opposite to it) of the latter, is (as we conceive) undeniably proved in the ninth Chapter of, *Redemption Redeemed.*

10. We cannot but judge our Brethrens Doctrine investing the Saints with an absolute certainty of Perseverance, to war with a strong hand against Godliness, and the advancement hereof in the World. The reason is, because it laies the reins of security upon the neck of the flesh, and of the old man, in Believers; and deprives them of the sharpest bit, which God hath given them wherewith to restrain and curb the unruly and unregenerate part of the Soul, (we mean) the fear and dread of eternal

See this Reason further opened and confirmed, *Redempt. Redeemed*, p. 333. 334, &c.

nal fire.) And we verily believe, that that very Doctrine, which we now oppoſe, hath mightily ſtrengthened the hand of that Firſt-born Apoſtate, *Satan*, in repleniſhing the World with a generation in his own likeneſs; we mean, with perſons who have forſaken the waies of righteouſneſs, and of truth, to walk in the paths of the ungodlineſs and prophaneneſs of this preſent World.

11. Neither can we reconcile our Brethrens Doctrine, with that moſt holy and righteous property in God, which gives him the honour of being ſtiled, Ἀπροσωπολήπτης, A non-Reſpecter of perſons; an honour very frequently (as we know) caſt upon him by the Scriptures. For if thoſe who have once truly believed, and ſo been in favour with God, ſhall turn aſide into the waies of the wickedneſs of the World, as of Adultery, Drunkenneſs, Covetouſneſs, Oppreſſion, &c. (as our Brethrens Doctrine it ſelf ſuppoſeth it very poſſible that ſuch men may do) in caſe God ſhall not ſubject them to the ſame law of Condemnation, for, and under the commiſſion of ſuch ſins, whereunto he ſubjecteth the reſt of the World, for the ſame crimes, what more manifeſt and notorious reſpect of perſons can there be imagined than this; eſpecially conſidering, that thoſe who have known God, and been countenanced and loved by him, are greater ſinners than other men,

(and

(and are ſo adjudged, and threatned accordingly, by God himſelf a) though committing but the ſame ſins *in ſpecie* with them?

12. We find many great and precious promiſes made by God unto thoſe, who ſhall perſevere unto the end. *But he that ſhall endure to the end, ſhall be ſaved* b. *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, &c.* Revel. 2. 6. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of life* c, (to omit many others.) Now we cannot look upon theſe and the like promiſes, but 1. as vouchſafed and given by God, by way of incouragement, and in the nature of means, whereby thoſe, who at preſent are Saints indeed, and do beleeve, may be enabled to hold out with conſtancy and faithfulneſs unto the end: this (we ſuppoſe) our Brethren themſelves will not deny. And 2. as altogether diſabled, fruſtrated, and made void, in reſpect of any contribution towards ſuch an end, by our Brethrens Doctrine of perſeverance. For if the perſeverance of the Saints be abſolute, and unconditioned, or neceſſitated, and wrought in them by an irreſiſtible hand of power, we cannot conceive how the ſaid promiſes ſhould have any influence or operation at all upon them in order thereunto. For that which is wrought irreſiſtibly, can have no dependence, in the cauſation of it, upon any ſuch means, which is reſiſtible, or moral; and conſequently not upon any promiſe, one,

a Act. 3. 2. Deut. 6. 15. Lam. 1. 12. Dan. 9. 12. Hoſ. 9. 1. Gal. 4. 9. &c. See more upon the account of this argument. *Redemption Redeemed*, pag. 300, 301. &c.

b Mat. 24. 13.

c Revel. 2. 10.

one, or more, the efficiency of theſe upon the hearts and Conſciences of men, being only moral, and ſuch which may be (and too frequently is) reſiſted, and this to fruſtration, in reſpect of the end properly and primarily intended by the ſaid promiſes (reſpectively.)

13. In like manner we look upon all the exhortations unto perſeverance adminiſtred by the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture unto the Saints (which are very many) as evacuated and made void by that Doctrine of perſeverance, which is commonly held and taught by our Brethren. For to what purpoſe can it be, ſeriouſly and ſolemnly to exhort, admoniſh, and perſwade men to be diligent in the uſe of means, for the preventing of ſuch an evil, which they have perfect and plenary aſſurance from God, neither ſhall, nor can ever befall, or come upon, them howſoever? Or is not this the voice of our Brethrens Doctrine of perſeverance? The uſe of means is in vain, and with no conſiſtency with the principles of reaſon, preſcribed or injoyned unto men, when either, firſt they know that they ſhall be made, or neceſſitated, to uſe them, whether they intend, or ſtir up themſelves to uſe them, or no: or 2. that the end, for the obtaining whereof, they ſhould, or are to be uſed, is ſo determined or decreed by God, that there is no poſſibility of their non-attaining it.

See this Argument alſo further opened, and fully vindicated againſt all objections. *Redemption Redeemed*, p. 317.

See this Argument further enlarged confirmed and ſecured, Redemption Redeemed, p. 302, 303, 304, &c.

14. Nor can we judg our Brethrens Doctrine

ctrine of perseverance of any better comportment with those threatnings, which are so frequently bent against Beleevers, in case of their non-perseverance, or apostasie. *Now the just* (saith the Apostle) *shall live by Faith: but if he draw back* (for so the place, if honestly translated, should be read) *my soul shall have no pleasure in him* a. So again: *when a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die* b. *Hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy Crown* c, (to passe by sundry others.) Threatnings, and Caveats, if regularly administred, alwayes import danger; but how they should apprehend, or be sensible of any danger, yea, or possibility, of falling away, who are assured by the infallible word of God that they shall never fall away, is beyond our capacity to understand.

a Heb. 10. 38.

b Ezek. 18. 26.

c Revel. 3. 11.

This Argument also is managed more at large, and dis-incumbred of all Objections. Redemption Redeemed p. 311, 312, 313, &c.

15. We, upon the premises cannot but conceive yet further that our Brethrens Doctrine of perseverance, wholly (or at least to a very great proportion) evacuateth the Ministry of the Gospel, so far as it concerneth the perseverance of the Saints (which is one of the highest, or most considerable ends, or services of it) rendring it impertinent, vain, and useless. For a Minister of the Gospel, is hardly capable of taking any other course, of using any other means, to further the perseverance of the Saints in Faith and holiness unto the end, but only by his diligence and faithfulness in pressing such

ſuch exhortations, threatnings, and promiſes in the Scriptures, which are here delivered by God, to furniſh and ſtrengthen his hand to that worthy work. So that as the Doctrine of Election, as it is commonly taught and received by our Brethren, renders the Miniſtry of the Goſpel little uſeful, in reſpect of perſons yet unconverted, in like manner, ſuch a Doctrine, which either makes theſe exhortations, threatnings, and promiſes themſelves, which now we ſpeak of, or elſe their preaching, and preſſing upon men, needleſs, uſeleſs, or void, muſt needs make the ſaid Miniſtry every whit as empty and weightleſs in reſpect of perſons already called, and converted, (at leaſt as to their perſeverance.) And our Brethrens Doctrine of perſeverance we can at no hand judge to be innocent from this great offence.

16. Nor can we apprehend or conceive, how the ſaid Doctrine can with any reaſonable gloſs or interpretation, be drawn to any good conſiſtency with the wiſdom of God: but in our eye it repreſenteth him weak, incongruous, and incoherent with himſelf, in his applications unto men. For to us it ſeems a thing very prepoſterous, that God ſhould firſt charge a man confidently to believe that he will irreſiſtibly cauſe him to perſevere, and eternally ſave him; and yet preſently threaten him alſo with ſuffering the vengeance

See this Argument more effectually propounded. Redemption Redeemed, p. 318.

vengeance of Hell-fire, in caſe he ſhall not perſevere. If a Parent ſhould firſt ſettle the inheritance upon his Son upon ſuch terms in Law, that he ſhould leave himſelf in no capacity, or power to reverſe his act in this kind, and ſhould withal plainly declare to this Son what he hath done in the buſineſs for him; would it not be a vain courſe for ſuch a Parent to threaten this Child with diſinheriting him, in caſe he ſhould prove undutiful, or unruly?

17. We find in Scripture that God propoſeth and promiſeth great rewards unto the perſeverance of his Saints. *But he that ſhall endure unto the end, ſhall be ſaved* a. And again: *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life* b, (with many like.) Now we conceive that the perſeverance of the Saints is rendred altogether unrewardable by the award of our Brethrens Doctrine concerning it. For (as we formerly ſhewed and proved) no act to the performance whereof a man is irreſiſtibly drawn, or neceſſitated, ſo that it is, or was, not in his power to do otherwiſe, is by any principle of juſtice, wiſdom, or equity, capable of reward, no more than actions meerly natural are: nay, ſuch actions as theſe, are rather rewardable than the other, (as was ſhewed likewiſe.)

a Mat. 24. 13.

b Revel. 2. 10.

18. Again, if perſeverance were abſolutely and unconditionedly promiſed unto the Saints by God, then when he admoniſh-

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eth and chargeth them to perſevere, or threatneth them in caſe they ſhall not perſevere, he ſhould admoniſh and charge them to perform his promiſes, and threaten them for non-performance of them. This conſequence is undeniable according to the principles of our Brethrens Doctrine. God (ſay they) hath poſitively and abſolutely promiſed perſeverance, or the gift of perſeverance, unto the Saints. Therefore, when by precept or exhortation he requires perſeverance of them, or enjoyns them to perſevere unto the end, he muſt needs be conceived to require of them, that which himſelf ſtands bound by promiſe to give unto them. And ſo when he threatneth them (or indeed any others) in caſe of Apoſtacy and back-ſliding, he ſhould threaten them (upon the account of ſuch a Doctrine) for not being omnipotent, or (which amounts to the ſame in ſubſtance) for not doing that, which is only proper for omnipotency to do.

19. We conceive yet further, that ſuch an abſolute promiſe of perſeverance, as our Brethren notion to be made by God unto the Saints, is diametrally repugnant to his Holineſs, and to the perfect love which he bears unto it in his Creature. For the import of ſuch a promiſe, being plainly and right down interpreted and underſtood, amounteth to as much, as if God ſhould be conceived to ſpeak thus

unto his Saints: Though ye turn Sons of *Belial*, and walk according to all the abominations of the World, commit adultery, murther, lie, ſteal, cozen, oppreſs, give your ſelves up to the pleaſures of the fleſh, and to all licentiouſneſs, *&c.* yet fear not the loſſe of my favour, nor of the Kingdom promiſed unto you: I will love you with my greateſt love, my love of Election, in the midſt of all theſe abominations; and will pour clean water upon you for your waſhing, when I ſee my time: take you no care, no thought, when, or how, to repent: I will engage with my omnipotency to bring you to repentance in due time. We tremble to put a promiſe of ſuch an horrid import, and conſequence as this, into the mouth of the moſt holy God. Nor are we able to underſtand how our Brethren, if they will be ingenuous, and own their Doctrine all over, can deny, but that that abſolute promiſe of perſeverance, which they with ſo much unadviſed heat attribute unto God, is a promiſe of no whit better an interpretation, or import, then ſo.

20. Nor do we know how to deliver or acquit our Brethrens Doctrine of perſeverance, from the high crime of turning all that moſt gracions Councel given by the Holy Ghoſt unto the Saints, into weakneſs and folly, which conſiſts, partly in the diligent information which he gives them from place to place, of Satans hoſtile, cruel, and bloody mind and intentions againſt them, part-

partly in detecting and making known all his ſubtile ſtratagems, plots, methods, and dangerous machinations againſt them, partly alſo in furniſhing them with ſpiritual weapons of all ſorts, whereby they may be able to grapple with him notwithſtanding; partly again in thoſe frequent admonitions, exhortations, incouragements to quit themſelves like men in reſiſting him, which are found in the Scriptures: and laſtly, in profeſſing his fear leſt Satan ſhould circumvent and deceive them. If it be ſuppoſed that the Saints live under the protection, are defended with the Shield and Buckler, of an abſolute Decree, an unconditioned promiſe of perſeverance from God, all thoſe operous and gracious applications of the Holy Ghoſt unto them in order to their perſeverance, and to prevent their apoſtacy, being weighed in a juſt balance, will be found very light.

See Redemption Redeemed p. 338, 339, &c.

21. Our Brethren themſelves grant and teach (as we have heard) that the Saints themſelves, and true Beleevers, may poſſibly fall into very horrid ſins, as murther, adultery, drunkenneſs, &c. yea and may lie impenitently under the guilt of them, at leaſt for a time. Now we find in Scripture the expreſs will of God to be, That they that do ſuch things as theſe, ſhould not inherit his Kingdom. *Know ye not* (ſaith the Apoſtle, as if that which he was now about to ſay, was nothing but what every *Chriſtian* either knew, or eaſily might or ought to

know) *that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?* Be not deceived, neither fornicators, *nor Idolators, nor adulterers, nor theeves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. Compare herewith, *Ephes.* 5. 5, 6. *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21. *Rev.* 21. 8. 27. *&c.* There is no clause of indulgence mentioned, or so much as hinted in any of these passages, on the behalf of such, who have sometimes been friends of *Christ*, or Beleevers: and we judg it no less then a matter of high misdemeanor in Christianity, for men to presume to interline any Declaration made by the Holy Ghost. Nay in the former of the two Texts last appointed at, (*viz. Revel.* 21. 8.) the note of universality, πάντες, is expressly added to one species of transgressors (there mentioned among others) and (according to the judgment of Interpreters) is to be understood of the rest. The tenor of the place is this: *But the fearful, and unbeleeving, and the abominable, and murtherers, and Whoremongers, and sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* The latter place of the same Chapter, is every whit as emphatical to our purpose: *And there shall* In No Wise *enter into it* [new *Jerusalem*] Any Thing *that defileth, neither* Whatsoever *worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they that are written in the Lambs Book of life.* This latter

latter clauſe (compared with the former part of the verſe) notably confuteth that *Book* of Election, which our Brethren have made. For in this *Book* of theirs, there are *fearful*, and *unbeleeving*, and *abominable*, *murtherer*., and *whoremongers*, *&c.* written, as well as Saints and Beleevers. Therefore *the Lambs Book of life*, and our Brethrens Book, are not Books of the ſame inſpiration.

22. We cannot look upon our Brethrens Doctrine touching perſeverance, but as gratifying, ſpiriting, and indulging the fleſh, and as weakening, flatting, cooling and quenching the ſpirit in men. If the fleſh, or old man, in the Saints, ſhould deſire a Goſpel according to their Genius or Intereſt, what other Goſpel could they rather deſire, then that, which ſhould warrant ſalvation upon the higheſt terms of aſſurance, though the fleſh ſhould roare, and rant, diſport and magnifie it ſelf in all manner of impiety and ways of abomination? Or what Doctrine can there lightly be imagined of a more melancholy, damping, deading import unto the ſpirit, then that which inſureth a man, that though the Spirit layeth aſide his Scepter, ſits ſtill, interpoſeth or acteth little in him, yea though he ſuffers himſelf to be troden and trampled upon by the fleſh, yet the Crown will be won notwithſtanding, and the great price of ſalvation carried with a high hand?

Or is not this the expreſs import of our Brethrens Doctrine of perſeverance? So, on the contrary, what Doctrine can there be more nipping, cutting, or crucifying to the fleſh, than that which avoucheth imminent danger of loſing the Crown of Life and Immortality, and of gaining the vengeance of eternal fire, if the fleſh ſhall be ſuffered to reign in men, or to fulfil the luſts and deſires of it? Again, what Doctrine can there well be fram'd, or ſuppoſed, which more naturally ſympathizeth with the Intereſt of the ſpirit, is more quickening, ſtrengthening, inflaming unto him, than that, which, beſides the mateing and yoking of his enemy the fleſh, ſuſpends the glory and great things of the World to come, the immortal peace and bleſſedneſs of the ſoul, upon the hearkening unto his Councels, the obeying of his motions, and the delivering up the regiment both of ſoul and body into his hand? Or is not this the expreſs tendency and import of the Doctrine maintained by us againſt our Brethren in the great buſineſs of perſeverance?

23. Our Brethrens Doctrine of peremptory perſeverance naturally and directly tendeth to beget, and foment, jealouſies and evil ſurmiſes between Brethren in *Chriſt*, and ſuch as ought cordially to love, reverence, and honour one another. For it teacheth, or directly occaſioneth us to judge

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the Faith and love of thoſe, whom we ought to love and honour, as Saints and Brethren in Chriſt, to be no better, than the Faith and love of Hypocrites, Diſſemblers, hollow Profeſſors, *&c.* and is of the ſame tendency to occaſion them to meaſure back again the ſame meaſure unto us. For we cannot reaſonably judge either the Faith, or love of thoſe, whom we ſtand moſt bound by the Law of *Chriſt*, to love, reverence, and honour as Saints and Brethren, to be better, greater, or more ſincere, than ſometimes we judged, or at leaſt ought to have judged the Faith and love of thoſe, to have been, whom that Doctrine of perſeverance, which we now oppoſe, teacheth us to judge to have been Hypocrites and falſe-hearted, even then when this Faith and love of theirs were at the beſt. This Argument is further proſecuted againſt Objections, *Redemption Redeemed*, Page 342, 343, *&c.*

24. We find many inſtances upon Scripture Record of perſons, who have *de facto*, ſome totally, others, both totally and finally, fallen from the Grace and favour of God, having been truly intereſſed in them before; as of *David*, *Solomon*, the *Galatians*, and ſome others; whoſe caſes in reference to their reſpective failings and apoſtacies, are particularly, and at large debated in the fourteenth Chapter of the late and oft-

mentioned Book, entituled, *Redemption Redeemed*: ſo that we forbear to inſiſt upon them here.

25. We are not a little confirmed, that we have the right end of the ſtaff in the queſtion in hand, by thoſe numerous and ſad examples amongſt our ſelves, of which we hear from time to time, and in perſons (not a few) well known unto ſome of us; whom we have ſometimes looked upon, and this not with the eye of charity only, but of the moſt diſtrict judgement whereof we were capable, not ſimply as perſons truly ſanctified, and real Believers, but as Pillars of *Chriſtian* Profeſſion round about them, as perſons for their exemplary zeal, faithfulneſs and fruitfulneſs in all well-doing, more like to ſit at the right hand, and left, of *Chriſt* in his Kingdom, than any others known to us: who notwithſtanding ſince have, with the Dog, returned to their vomit, and with the Sow clean waſhed, to their wallowing in the mire.

26. In this point of diſſent from our Brethren, we have likewiſe the great buſh of Orthodox, and learned Antiquity at our back, which voteth with us herein, and this with a *nemine contradicente*, (as far as yet we underſtand. Hereof (we conceive) good proof is made in the fifteenth Chapter of the laſt mentioned diſcourſe.

27. Laſtly; We are given to underſtand, (and ſome of us know the thing more

more particularly) that there are very few of note (if any) amongſt our Proteſtant Writers themſelves, who do not in their Writings, now and then, give a clear and and fair teſtimony to the truth of that Doctrine, the cauſe whereof we now plead in diſſent from our Brethren. Yea, ſome of theſe, as *Melanchon*, *Muſculus* and *Hemmingius* by name, (to whom *Luther* himſelf, and others, might without any juſt cauſe of exception, or offence, be added) ſtand fully declared in their writings for our ſenſe in the preſent controverſie. Yea, the Synod of *Dort* it ſelf in the tenth particular of the Agreement between our Brethren, and us, in the point in hand, formerly expreſſed, declaring their ſenſe to be, that perſons *ſupernaturally enlightened, and who hereby underſtand the things declared in the Word of God, to be true, and yield an* Unfeigned aſſent *unto them*, &c. *may both totally and finally fall away*; do, in true conſtruction, ſtand by us againſt our Brethren, in the Doctrine of perſeverance. This, together with the whole content and ſubſtance of this Reaſon beſides, is demonſtratively aſſerted in the latter part of the fifteenth Chapter of the late named Book, from Pag. 383. to Pag. 403. (incluſively.)

For a concluſion, we only add this: That there are two main conſiderations and grounds, (as may be obſerved along the premiſſes) which (next to the Divine

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Authority of the Scriptures) have commanded our judgements and Consciences, not to one, or some, but to all the points, or particulars, relating to all the five heads of Doctrine specified, in which we dissent in judgment from our Brethren.

1. We conceive our Brethrens Doctrine, in all the particularities of our dissent from it (as they have been argued by us) hath in it a black thread of a manifest inconsistence with the nature and attributes of God, struck quite through it, and more especially, and more visibly, with his immutability, simplicity, wisdom, Grace, goodness, justice, and love to mankind. Insomuch, that though we are most vehemently, and even passionately inclin'd to unity and peace with our Brethren, in matters of Faith, yet are we not able with the best of our understandings to reconcile their Doctrine in the points dissented, with these glorious properties and perfections of our ever-blessed God.

2. Neither are we able by the most diligent, and most unpartial ingagements of our Reasons, Judgements, Consciences, and Understandings, to reduce our Brethrens Doctrine, in the said particulars, to any tolerable consistency with the Interest or advancement of true godliness in the World. And some of us have read, how that worthy Instrument of God, and Companion of *Luther*, in the Reformation (*Melanthon* we mean) doth very

very frequently in his Writings, gravely admoniſh, and very ſeriouſly and importunately requeſt young men to take heed of ſuch Doctrines, or opinions, which (as he expreſſeth it) are *in Deum contumelioſa, & bonis moribus noxia*, i. e. reproachful unto God, and pernicious to good works, (ſpeaking of thoſe very opinions, which our Brethren maintain in oppoſition to us, according to the tenor of the premiſes.) We, through the Grace of God vouchſafed unto us, truly and ardently love him; and cannot bear a thought or apprehenſion, which we judge unworthy of him, or derogatory, either to his Grace, or Glory otherwiſe.

FINIS.